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X

SERMONS

ON

Several Occasions :

PARTICULARLY

Of the Great Duty of Universal
Love and Charity.

Of the Government of Passion:
Discourses upon Occasion of the
PLAGUE.

Of St. PETER being the Rock
on which CHRIST built his
Church.

Of the Faith of ABRAHAM.

Of CHRIST being the Bread of
Life.

Of the Original of Sin and Mi-
sery.

Of Election and Reprobation;
being a Paraphrase on ROM.
ix.

The PRESENT Life a State of
PROBATION in order to a Fu-
ture Life.

That CHRIST's Admonitions to
his Apostles, belong universally
to all Christians.

By SAMUEL CLARKE, D. D. late Rector of
St. James's Westminster.

The FOURTH EDITION.

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M DCC XXXVIII.

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John Parkhill
Belfast, 1860



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SERM



*The Great Duty of Universal LOVE
and CHARITY.*

A
SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN,

AT

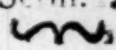
St. JAMES's CHAPEL,

On Sunday Decemb. 30th, 1705.

Publiſh'd by Her MAJESTY's Special Command.

I JOHN IV. 21.

*And this Commandment have we from him,
that he who loveth God, love his Brother
also.*

THE true End and Design of Serm. 1.
Religion, is manifestly this; 
to make Men wiser and bet-
ter; to improve, exalt, and
perfect their Nature; to teach them to
B obey

Serm. I. *W* obey and love and imitate God; to cause them to extend their Love and Goodness and Charity to all their Fellow-Creatures, each in their several Stations, and according to the Measure of their several Abilities; in like Manner as the universal Goodness of God, extends it self over all his Works through the whole Creation: And to oblige them to govern the Passions of their Mind, with Moderation; and the Appetites of their Body, with Temperance. This is plainly the chief End and Design of true Religion. And whoever acts contrary to all or any of these great Rules, by wilfully dishonouring God, by hating his Brother, or by abusing and corrupting himself; is either a false and hypocritical Professor of the Truth, if he does these Things in Contradiction to the plain Rules, and in Defiance of the Laws of his Religion; or else the Religion which he professes, is itself a false and corrupt Religion, if he does any of these Things in Compliance with the Principles, and by Permission of the Laws thereof. The Religion of the Church of *Rome*, is therefore a false and corrupt Religion; because, as it dishonours *God* by mixing Idolatry with Divine Worship, and gives Men too much Encouragement to corrupt *Themselves* and to indulge their vicious Inclinations and Habits,



Universal LOVE and CHARITY.

3

Habits, by allowing them, through many Superstitious Rites, to reconcile a wicked Life with the Hopes of Heaven; so it particularly permits, nay, and requires Men to hate and persecute their Brethren. And those whom, for want of the Arguments of Reason and Truth, they are not able to convince and bring over to their Party, they endeavour by all the Ways of Violence and Cruelty to root out and extirpate from among Men: As if the Religion of Christ was intended to divest Men of common Humanity, and the Service and Glory of God could in good earnest be promoted by the Destruction of Mankind. This is one of the greatest Corruptions of an excellent Institution, that can be imagined; when Religion itself, instead of promoting the universal Peace and Happiness and Welfare of Men, is made to authorize such Practices, the Prevention whereof is manifestly the chief and greatest End for which any Religion can reasonably be supposed to have been instituted at all. Particular Persons, under the Profession of the best and purest Religion in the World, may be led away with some Degrees of this Spirit of Errour; through a false Zeal, and a mistaken Judgment; as some of the Apostles themselves were for calling for Fire from Heaven upon the

Serm. I. *W* obey and love and imitate God; to cause them to extend their Love and Goodness and Charity to all their Fellow-Creatures, each in their several Stations, and according to the Measure of their several Abilities; in like Manner as the universal Goodness of God, extends it self over all his Works through the whole Creation: And to oblige them to govern the Passions of their Mind, with Moderation; and the Appetites of their Body, with Temperance. This is plainly the chief End and Design of true Religion. And whoever acts contrary to all or any of these great Rules, by wilfully dishonouring God, by hating his Brother, or by abusing and corrupting himself; is either a false and hypocritical Professor of the Truth, if he does these Things in Contradiction to the plain Rules, and in Defiance of the Laws of his Religion; or else the Religion which he professes, is itself a false and corrupt Religion, if he does any of these Things in Compliance with the Principles, and by Permission of the Laws thereof. The Religion of the Church of *Rome*, is therefore a false and corrupt Religion; because, as it dishonours God by mixing Idolatry with Divine Worship, and gives Men too much Encouragement to corrupt *Themselves* and to indulge their vicious Inclinations and Habits,



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Serm. I. Samaritans who refused to entertain our Saviour: But the Christian Religion *it self*, the pure and uncorrupted Doctrine of our Saviour, is entirely opposite to this Spirit; and teaches us nothing but Love and Peace, Meekness and Charity, Patience and Forbearance one towards another. *If a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar; For this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.*

In the following Discourse upon which Words, I shall endeavour, *First*, to shew briefly the great Obligation, which lies upon all Men in general, considered as Equals, to practise this excellent Duty of Love and Meekness, Patience and Forbearance one towards another. And, *Secondly*, I shall consider some of the principal and most remarkable Variations of this Duty, arising from the different Relations and Circumstances that Men stand in, one towards another.

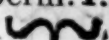
I. As to the Obligation which lies upon all Men in general, consider'd as Equals, to practise this great Duty of universal Love, Meekness, and Charity; 'tis evident,

1st. That, by the Original Order and Constitution of Nature, Men are so made
and

Universal LOVE and CHARITY.

and framed, that they necessarily want Serm. I.
one another's Help and Assistance, for
their mutual Support and Preservation in
the World. They cannot subsist, at least
they cannot enjoy any Comfort of Life,
independently on each other; but are
manifestly fitted by the very Frame of
their Nature, to live in Communities;
and Society is absolutely necessary for
them; and the Bond of all Society, is
mutual Love, Charity and Friendship.
Now in this Respect, all Men naturally
stand upon the same Level; they have
all the same natural Wants and Desires;
they are all in the same Need of each
other's Assistance, and are equally ca-
pable of enjoying the Benefits and Ad-
vantages of Society. 'Tis manifest there-
fore that every Man, as he is a Man, is
bound by the Law of his Nature, by
common *Humanity*, to look upon him-
self as a Part or Member of that one uni-
versal Body or Community, which is
made up of all Mankind; to think him-
self born and sent into the World on pur-
pose, to promote the publick Good and
Welfare of all his Fellow-Creatures; and
consequently obliged, as the necessary and
only effectual Means to that End, to em-
brace them all with universal Love, Cha-
rity, and Benevolence.

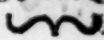
Serm. I. And as all Men are obliged to this, by the necessary *Law and Condition* of their Being, and by all the outward *Circumstances* of the present State, wherein God has placed them; so they are also strongly prompted to it by the *natural Inclinations* of their own Minds, when not corrupted by the Practice of Vice. For by Nature Men are plainly disposed to be kind and friendly, and willing to do good. Nothing is naturally more agreeable and pleasant to the Mind of Man, than being helpful and beneficial one to another. And, did they not suffer Covetousness and Revenge, and other foolish and absurd Passions, unreasonably to over-rule this their natural Disposition; they would universally enjoy the happy Fruits and Effects of it. For even in the present most corrupt State of the World, as far as their Vices will permit, Men still desire to keep up a general Commerce and Communication with each other; they love to encrease their Dependencies, by multiplying Affinities; and to enlarge their Friendships, by mutual good Offices; and to establish Societies, by a Communication of Arts and Labour and Industry. the only possible Means of preserving which Societies in any tolerable and durable Manner, being the Practice of mutual Love and universal Charity and Benevolence;

lence; shows plainly what the Direction Serm. I.
and Tendency of uncorrupted Nature is. 

No Man therefore can, without transgressing both the plain *Law* of his Being, and also acting contrary to the Reason of his own Mind and the natural *Inclination* of his uncorrupted Affections, do willingly any Hurt or Mischief to any Man: But every one is obliged for the publick Benefit, to endeavour to do good to all, and to love all Men even as himself. And upon what Occasion soever any Misunderstandings or Provocations may happen to arise, he ought immediately to endeavour to appease with Gentleness, rather than exasperate with Retaliations, and put an End to all Differences, as soon as possibly he can. By this Means the World would become as happy, as 'tis possible for Men in this present State of Imperfection to be. And nothing hinders Mankind from arriving actually at this Degree of Happiness, but most *perverse* and most *unreasonable Iniquity*.

For, in order to bring about this great and excellent End, *viz.* universal Love and Friendship, and all the happy Effects and Consequences of it; nothing further is requisite, than that Men do to others in all Respects, what they would reasonably desire that others should in like Circumstances do to them. This is all that

Serm. I. is really meant by loving others as themselves; and thus much they are manifestly obliged to, by the plainest *Equity*, and by the clearest *Reason* in the World. Every Man is desirous, and thinks it highly reasonable, that others should deal with *Him*, according to the Rules of Equity, Humanity and Friendship; that they should be tender of his Life, Estate and Reputation; that in Matters of Commerce, they should treat him with Justice, Fairness and Truth; that in Things wherein he stands in Need of their Assistance, and has good Ground to expect it, they should be willing to relieve him according to their Power; that in case of Ignorance or Mistake, they should be ready to inform him; and, where he has given any Offence, to forgive him upon his Desire of Reconciliation. This every Man thinks reasonable in his own Case; and therefore he is undeniably bound to think it reasonable likewise, whenever it be *another Man's* Case to expect the like from *Him*. And if he does not act according to this Judgment; he is manifestly guilty of such Iniquity and Unrighteousness, as nothing but Custom in Wickedness, and the Number of evil Examples could be able to support Men under, and harden them in the Practice of it, against the Shame and Self-condemnation of their
own

own Minds. For, what is in it self fit Serm. I.
and right to be done, every Man's own 
Conscience plainly tells him; and, when-
soever he gives himself Time seriously to
consider and review his Actions, it accor-
dingly either applauds and commends him,
and affords him great Pleasure and Satis-
faction, from the Sense of his having an-
swered the chief Ends of his Creation, and
complied with the highest Obligations of
his Nature, in having endeavoured to pro-
mote the universal Welfare and Happi-
ness of Mankind, by the Practice of Truth
and Righteousness, Meekness, Goodness
and Charity; or else, on the other Side,
it cannot but secretly reproach and severe-
ly condemn him, for having acted the
contrary Part. Which Judgment of Con-
science, though Men may indeed conceal
from the World, and dissemble their Sense
of the Weight of it upon their own Minds,
in respect of their *own Actions*; yet it al-
ways discovers it self in the Cenfures they
pass upon the *Actions of others*. For,
how much Wickedness, and Uncharita-
bleness, or Pride and Contentiousness so-
ever, Men can overlook in *themselves*; yet
there is no Man, but in judging of *others*,
where his own Interest and Passions are
not concerned, will rightly enough di-
stinguish concerning the Characters of Per-
sons, and the true Value of Mens Actions;
will

Serm. I. will give just Applause and Commendation to Men of meek and peaceable and quiet Spirits, Lovers of Mankind, such as delight to do good, and to make all about them as easy and happy as they can; and, on the contrary, will freely condemn the Promoters of Hatred, Animosity, and Contention. All which plainly shows, both what the Law of our Nature, and what the original Inclinations of our Affections are, when not corrupted with the Practice of Vice.

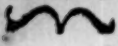
2. As all Men are obliged thus by the necessary *Circumstances and Condition* of their Being, and also by the *original and natural Inclinations* of their own Minds, to love and to do Good to each other, according to their several Powers and Abilities: So they are still further and more strictly obliged to the Practice of the same Duty, in *Imitation* of the *Nature*, and in *Obedience* to the *Will and Law* of *God*. *God himself is Love*, as the Apostle styles him; an infinite and inexhaustible Fountain of never-failing Goodness: Who, being infinitely and eternally happy in the Injoyment of his own unspeakable Perfections, could have no other Motive to create Things at first, but only that he might communicate his Goodness and Happiness to his Creatures; and continues to preserve them for no other Reason,

1 Joh. iv. 8.

Reason, but that he may still continue to *Serm. I.*
do good to them. *He maketh his Sun to*
rise on the Evil and on the Good, and send- *Match. v.*
eth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust: 45.

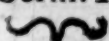
Giving us from Heaven fruitful Seasons, *Acts xiv.*
and filling our Hearts with Food and Glad- 17.
ness. Now for the same Reason that God

does *himself* continually delight in doing Good, and seems always to take especial Pleasure in describing himself by that particular Attribute of Love and Goodness; for the same Reason it must necessarily be his Will, that all reasonable Creatures should imitate him in that excellent Perfection; and by the Practice of mutual Love and Charity, permit and assist each other to enjoy in particular the several Effects and Blessings of the Divine universal Goodness. God cannot but be pleased with such, who endeavour to conform themselves to the Likeness of his Divine Nature, and make it their Business, according to the Extent of their Power, and the Measure of their several Abilities, to promote the Welfare and Happiness of all their Fellow-Creatures; in like Manner as the Love and Goodness and Mercy of God extends it self universally over all his Works through the whole Creation. He has given us noble Powers and Faculties on Purpose, to enable us to imitate him in the Exercise of these excellent Attributes. He has en-
duced

Serm. I.  dued us with Reason and Understanding for that very End, that we might be able to discern between Good and Evil, and learn to choose the one and avoid the other. He has implanted in our Minds such Affections and Dispositions, as naturally incline us to be *kind* and *friendly* and *charitable* one towards another. He has so framed and constituted our Nature, and so ordered the Circumstances of our present State, as to make Society and Friendship necessary to the Support and Comfort of Life; on Purpose that Men might be continually exercised in the Practice of these divine Virtues. He has interwoven the Interests of Men, and made the Happiness of every particular Person depend upon the Welfare of the Publick; that each one, from the Sense of his own Wants and Exigencies, might see the Reasonableness and Necessity of making it his principal Business to do good to others. In fine; he has given us no other Way of expressing so acceptably our Love and Gratitude to himself, whom we *have*

Joh iv. 21. *not seen*; as by loving and doing good to our Brethren, whom *we have seen*. For

1 Joh. iv. *no Man hath seen God at any Time*; but
12 and 13. *if we love one another, hereby we know, that God, tho' invisible, yet really dwelleth in us, and that his Love is perfected in us, and that we dwell in him, and he in us, because*

cause we are Imitators of his Nature and Serm. I.
Partakers of *his Spirit*. And thus much 
is clear even from the bare Light of Na-
ture it self.

But then, 3dly, The *Christian* Religi-
on carries our Obligation to the Practice
of this excellent Duty, still much higher.
We are *Now* obliged to love and to do
good to one another, not only by the Ties
of common Humanity, as we are Men, and
Partakers of the same common Nature ;
but we are further to look upon our selves
as *Brethren* in a more peculiar and eminent
Manner, being all the Children of God
in Christ, all Members of the same Bo-
dy, all Partakers of the same *Spirit*, all
Heirs of the same blessed Hope of Im-
mortality. *There is one Body, and one* Eph. iv. 4.
Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope
of your Calling ; one Lord, one Faith, one
Baptism, one God and Father of all, who
is above all, and in you all. Wherefore
I beseech you, says the Apostle, *that ye* Eph. iv. 1.
walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye
are called ; with all Lowliness and Meek-
ness, with Long-suffering, forbearing one
another in Love ; endeavouring to keep the
Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.


Again: We Christians, have not only
the *Example* of God's Love and Good-
ness in general proposed to our Imitation,
as these excellent Attributes of the Divine
Nature

Serm. I. Nature are made known to us by right

W Reason, and by the Light of Nature, and by our continual Experience of that good Providence which presides over all, and does good to all, and manifests it self daily in all the Works of God through the whole Creation: But we have moreover the Example of God's Goodness and loving Kindness manifested to us in a more *particular* and extraordinary Manner, in that singular Instance of the Redemption of Mankind by the Death of his Son: Of which exceeding great and undeserved Mercy, we being all Partakers, and having all our Hopes of Happiness founded upon it, are consequently under the strongest Obligation possible, to be in our Proportion kind and merciful and charitable to our *Brethren*, as God has been infinitely good and merciful to *Us*. This Argument is strongly urged by the Apostle St. Paul, Col. iii. 12. *Put on therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man has a Quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these Things, put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfection; and let the Peace of God rule in your*

Universal LOVE and CHARITY.

15

your Hearts, to the which also ye are called *Serm. I.*
in one Body. 

Lastly; as we are Christians, we are obliged to love and to do good to each other; not only by our knowing *in general*, from the Consideration of the Divine Nature and Attributes, that it must needs be agreeable to the Will of God that we should do so; but by having moreover received it, with singular Inforcement, as the *peculiar* Law and Command of our Saviour, on which he insists particularly, and seems to recommend it above all others, as the most absolutely necessary and indispensable Qualification of a sincere Christian. *A new Commandment*, saith he, *I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another; Joh. xiii. 34.* And he makes it as it were the distinguishing Mark and Badge of his Disciples: *By this shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one towards another.* He himself whilst he was here upon Earth, *went continually about, doing good*; and in so doing he has set us an Example, wherein he indispensably requires that we should follow his Steps. And accordingly we find the Apostles every where declaring, that universal Love and Charity, *is the End of the Commandment*, the principal Aim and Design

Serm. I. Design of our whole Religion, 1 Tim. i. 5.

That he that loveth his Neighbour hath fulfilled the Law; For that all the Commandments are briefly comprehended in this Saying, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self, Rom. xiii. 8. And again; that all the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self, Gal. v. 14. Inasmuch that whosoever wants this excellent Virtue; all his other Pretences of Religion whatsoever, and of Zeal for the Service of God, are declared to be vain and of no Value. If a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Lyar, 1 Joh. iv. 20. And St. Paul in like manner: Though I speak, saith he, with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and have not Charity; I am become as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal; That is, all my Pretences to Religion are false and empty. And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries and all Knowledge; and though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have no Charity; I am nothing. And though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burned; and have not Charity; it profiteth me nothing; 1 Cor. xiii. 1. And the Reason why so particular a Stress is laid upon the Practice of this great Duty of univer-

universal Love and Charity, is plain. Sermon. I.
 Namely, because it is that Temper and
 Disposition of Mind, which is the high-
 est possible Improvement and Perfection
 of our rational Nature. 'Tis that which
 makes our Souls like unto God, who is
 Goodness itself. 'Tis that which, in the
 Nature of the thing itself, is of the last
 and utmost Importance, as being natu-
 rally and necessarily the Condition and
 Ground both of our present Happiness
 and of that which is to come. 'Tis a
 Qualification of Mind absolutely necessa-
 ry, to make us capable of the *Sight* of
 God, and of the Happiness of Heaven.
 For we must be like God, if we will *see*
him as he is : And we must first attain
 that Disposition of Mind, wherein the
 Happiness of Heaven essentially consists ;
 if we will hope to be Partakers of that
 Happiness. In a Word ; that Frame of
 Mind which inclines us to do good, and
 to take Delight in doing it, is it self the
 Temper and Disposition of Happiness ;
 and without this, 'tis no more possible
 for a rational Creature to be made Happy,
 than it is to alter the Nature and Essen-
 ces, the necessary and eternal Reason and
 Proportion of Things. This is the plain
 and necessary Reason, why Love and
 Charity and Goodness, are constantly pre-
 ferred before all other Virtues ; as being
 C the

Serm. I. the ultimate End and Design of Religion,
 and themselves a principal and necessary
 Ingredient of the Joys of Heaven. Almost
 all *other* Virtues, or Gifts and Excellen-
 cies whatsoever, are but as Means to this
 End; and to be *done away when that*
which is perfect is come. Hope, is but
 the present Expectation, and Faith, the
 firm Belief of those Things which shall
 be made manifest hereafter. And when
 that comes to pass, then these Virtues,
 and all other Gifts which are in Order to
 these, must necessarily and of Course
 cease. *Whether there be Prophecies, they*
shall fail; whether there be Tongues, they
shall cease; whether there be Knowledge, it
shall vanish away. But Charity and Good-
 ness *never fail.* These are Dispositions of
 Mind which are begun in the *Virtues of*
this Life, and compleated in the *Glory*
of the next; which will grow up with
 the Improvements of our Knowledge and
 Virtue here, to a perfect and unspeakable
 Happiness in the Enjoyments of the World
 to come.

1 Cor. xiii.
 8.

And now, could any Man, who se-
 riously considered these Things, and was
 unacquainted with the Practice of the
 World, believe it possible, that Men, who
 professed that holy Religion which so
 plainly teaches this Doctrine of Peace,
 should yet so directly contrary to the
 whole

whole End and Design of the Religion of Serm. I. Christ, (as is too plainly the Practice of the chief Propagators of the *Romish* Faith) indulge their Passions, their Pride, their Covetousness, their Ambition so far, as not only to be the Cause of Envyings, Strifes and Contentions, but even to make *Wars and Fightings* necessary among *Jam. iv. 1.* Christians? to the infinite Scandal of our most holy Religion, in the Sight of *Jews* and *Turks* and *Pagans*; among whom the Name of God is blasphemed through Us, as it is written; *Rom. ii. 24.* Could such a one believe it possible, if it was not too manifest in Experience; that Men who call themselves Christians, should oppress and bite and devour one another, and not be afraid of the Apostle's threatening, that they should be consumed one of another? *Gal. v. 15* And is it not still much more absurd, that Religion it self, that the Religion of Christ, the Religion of Peace and Love, which was intended to reconcile Men to God and to each other, should it self be made the Occasion of Hatred, Animosities and Contentions; nay, of the greatest Oppressions and most inhumane Cruelties? In a Word, that Pretences of Religion it self, should produce in Men that Spirit, for the preventing whereof all Religion was principally and ultimately intended? I shall conclude this Head with

Serm. I. those remarkable Words of the Apostle

St. James, Jam. iii. 13. Who is a wise Man, and endued with Knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good Conversation his Works with Meekness of Wisdom. But if ye have bitter Envyings and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lye not against the Truth. This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish; for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil Work. But the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, &c.

II. It remains that I proceed in the 2^d Place to consider briefly some of the principal Variations of this great Duty, arising from the different Relations and Circumstances which Men stand in one towards another.

And here the Practice of this Duty is *diversified* as many Ways, as there are different Stations, or different Circumstances and Conditions of Men in the World. I shall only mention these following; from which all the rest may easily be deduced.

1st. What this great Duty of Love and Charity obliges us to, in respect of our Behaviour

Behaviour towards *Superiours* and *Inferiours*. Sermon I.

2dly. How it obliges us to behave our selves towards our *Enemies*, or those who have done us any particular Injury. And

3dly. How it obliges good Men to behave themselves towards those, who are either *neglecters* or *despisers* of Religion in general, or so unhappy as to be involved in some particular *great* and *pernicious* Errors.

1st. In respect of our Behaviour towards *Superiours*; the Duty of *universal Love* is to shew forth it self in hearty, willing and cheerful Obedience to the Commands of those whom God has set over us: In delighting to promote their Honour, and to increase amongst Men that Duty and Respect, which is due to Authority: In thinking them that *rule well, worthy of double Honour*: And (because all Government is a Burden, as well as an Honour; therefore) this Duty particularly obliges us to endeavour to make that Burden as light and easy as we can, by a careful and diligent and conscientious Discharge of our several Duties, each in our respective Stations; so as unanimously to promote all the Ends and Designs of good Government, the Execution of wise and wholesome Laws, and the Peace and Prosperity of the Publick.

Serm. I. In respect of our Behaviour towards
Inferiors; the Duty of Christian Love
 is to show forth it self in just and righteous
 and merciful Dealings; in readily relieving
 the Necessities of those that want; in
 delivering and vindicating the Oppressed;
 in instructing the Ignorant and those that
 are in Error; in reprovng the Wicked, and,
 by good Example as well as good Advice,
 persuading and bringing them to a better
 Mind: In a Word, doing all the Good we
 can, both to the Souls and Bodies of Men;
 in imitating of our Saviour, *who went about doing good.*

Now by how much the greater any
 Man's Power or Riches, Interest or Authority
 is, and by how much the higher his Station
 is in the World; by so much the greater
 is his Power of doing good, and by so much
 the more glorious is his exercising and
 imploying his Power to that excellent and
 noble End. And here is the true and
 immortal Glory of wise and good Princes,
 that as they represent God in the Exercise
 of Power and Authority in the World, so
 they resemble him also in the Application
 of that Power to serve the Ends of Virtue
 and Goodness in promoting the publick
 Happiness of Mankind. Power is not
 desirable for its own Sake, any more than
 Wisdom

Wisdom and Knowledge ; but only for *Serm. I.*
the Sake of that greater Good, which it
enables Men to do in the World. And
to abuse Power to the enslaving and de-
stroying of Mankind, and to the serving
such Purposes, the preventing whereof is
indeed the only good Reason for which
Power is truly desirable ; is the greatest
Weakness and Absurdity in the World.
To employ great Power and Riches in con-
quering and subduing many Nations, in
causelessly oppressing Multitudes of People,
and subverting the common Rights and Li-
berties of Men ; is the greatest Folly, as
well as the greatest Wickedness, imagina-
ble : And nothing can be more weak and
contrary to Reason, than to call that Am-
bition by the Name of Glory and Great-
ness, which is really the most inglorious
and the most dishonourable Thing in Na-
ture. God is the supreme Governor of
the World, possessed entirely of absolute
and uncontrollable Power : Yet he makes
Use of that Power to no other End, but
to preserve and support and do good to
all his Creatures, according to their sever-
al Natures and Capacities. He is *good*,
and *does good* ; and esteems Goodness his
greatest Glory and Perfection, the Title
which he most delights to be described
by. True Greatness therefore, is to imi-
tate God in this most glorious Perfection
of

Serm. I. of Goodness. And those whom he has
 ~~~~~  
 endowed with Power and Authority to represent him on Earth, are then most truly and illustriously his Vice-gerents, when they look upon a large Extent of Power, to be only a greater Compass of doing good, when they imitate God, in being Lovers and Preservers of Mankind, and making Government a Protection and Security to all that live under it. And if beyond this, they be still further enabled to restrain the Fury of Oppressors abroad, and to be Vindicators of the common Rights and Liberties of Nations; this is still a higher Degree of true Honour and Greatness, and a becoming really the Praise and Glory of the whole Earth. How unspeakably happy is that People, on whom God has vouchsafed to bestow so inestimable a Blessing! And how thankful ought we to be, that the Description of such Felicity, is at this time the exact Description of our own Case!

2dly. In Respect of our Behaviour towards our *Enemies*, or those who have done us any particular Injury; the Duty of universal Love and Charity, is to shew forth it self in a willing and ready Disposition to forgive them upon their Repentance and desire of Reconciliation. *If thy Brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and*

and if he repent, forgive him : And if he *Serm. I.*  
 trespass against thee seven times in a Day, and  
 seven times in a Day turn again to thee, say-  
 ing, I repent ; thou shalt forgive him, Luk.  
 xvii. 3. This we Christians are in a par-  
 ticular manner obliged to, by the Exam-  
 ple of God's much greater Goodness and  
 Compassion towards Us. Since God has  
 forgiven us all, our *ten thousand Talents* ;  
 nothing can be more reasonable in the  
 Nature of the Thing it self, than that  
 we should be moved by that Example to  
 forgive one another *freely our hundred*  
*Pence* ; and to have Compassion each on  
 our fellow-servants, as God has had Pity  
 on Us. But besides the Reasonableness  
 of the Thing itself, God has moreover  
 made it the expresse Condition of our own  
 enjoying the Benefit of *His* gracious Par-  
 don : For, *so likewise*, saith our Saviour,  
*shall my heavenly Father do also unto you,*  
*if ye from your Hearts forgive not every*  
*one his Brother their Trespases*, Mat.  
 xviii. 35. And accordingly we are di-  
 rected even in our daily Prayer, to ask  
 Forgiveness at the Hands of God ; only  
 upon such Condition, and in such man-  
 ner, as we forgive one another our Tref-  
 passes. And this is, upon Supposition of  
 our Enemies repenting : But if they do  
 not repent, yet even still we are obliged

Serm. I. to *love* and *bleſs* them, to *pray* for them,  
 and take all Opportunities of *doing good*  
 to them; after the Example of our heavenly Father, who doth good even to the Evil and the Unthankful. Nevertheless, all that is ſaid upon this Head, is to be underſtood of *private*, not of *the publick* Enemies; againſt whom neither the Laws of Nature nor of Chriſtianity, have provided any other Way of ſecuring our ſelves, than by endeavouring to deprive them of the Power of hurting us.

*Laſtly*, in reſpect of the Behaviour of good Men towards thoſe who are either Neglecters and Deſpiſers of Religion in general, or ſo unhappy as to be involved in ſome particular great and pernicious Errors; the Duty of univerſal Love and Charity, obliges us to endeavour by all the Ways of Gentleneſs, Inſtruction and Reproof, to bring them to Repentance and a better Mind. Magiſtrates indeed, and thoſe who are placed in Authority, may and ought to make uſe of Punishment and Severity, towards thoſe who are guilty of ſuch Crimes, as are deſtructive of humane Society; and the ſtrict Execution of Good Laws, is in that Caſe an Inſtance of the greateſt Love and Charity to the Publick. But otherwiſe, 'tis the Duty of a *Servant of the Lord*, not to *ſtrive*, but to *be gentle unto all Men*,  
 apt

apt to teach, patient; in Meekness instructing Serm. I.  
those that oppose themselves, if God perad- Jam. i. 20  
venture will give them Repentance to the Ac-  
knowledgment of the Truth. For, the Wrath  
of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God:  
And our Saviour himself severely con-  
demns That Spirit, which some of his  
Disciples discovered, when they desired  
to call for Fire from Heaven, upon the  
Samaritans who refused to give him Re-  
ception. Such Persons as are not yet  
come to have a Right Sense of Religion  
in general, 'tis our Duty to persuade by  
Reason and Arguments; to convince  
them of the Being, Attributes and Pro-  
vidence of God; of the Necessity and  
infinite Importance of Religion; of the  
unalterable Difference of Good and E-  
vil; of the Reasonableness, Excellency,  
and positive Evidence of the Christian  
Revelation. And those who are so unhap-  
py as to be involved in any particular  
pernicious Errors, 'tis our Duty to in-  
form, instruct, reprove, and by all Chri-  
stian Means endeavour to bring them  
back to the Acknowledgment of the  
Truth: Taking Care above all Things,  
to show them by our good Examples, and  
by the Influence of the Truth upon our  
own Lives; that we have no other De-  
sign in endeavouring to convince them,  
but theirs and our own Salvation. In  
promo-



Serm. I. promoting which Ends, we shall do well  
 to have always imprinted on our Minds  
 those excellent Words, wherewith St.  
*James* concludes his Epistle: *Brethren, if  
 any of you do err from the Truth, and one  
 convert him; let him know, that he which  
 converteth the Sinner from the Error of his  
 Way, shall save a Soul from death, and shall  
 hide a Multitude of Sins.*



A SER-

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A  
SERMON

Preach'd at the FUNERAL of  
*MARY* Lady *COOKE*,

Late WIFE of

Sir *John Cooke*, of *Doctor's-Com-*  
*mons, London*, Knight, Doctor  
of *L A W S*, &c.

On Tuesday, October 11. 1709.

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2 COR. V. 8.

*We are confident, I say, and willing rather  
to be absent from the Body, and to be pre-*  
*sent with the Lord.*

**T**HE Apostle in the foregoing  
Chapter declares at large how the  
Assurance of a Resurrection from  
the Dead, not only enabled him to per-  
form cheerfully all the Duties of a Chri-  
stian Life, but supported him also, so as  
not to faint under the severest Persecutions,  
which

Serm.

II.



Serm. which continually threatned him even

II. with Death itself. *Therefore as we have*

*received Mercy, saith he, we faint not, ver.*

*1. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplex'd, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed, ver. 8, 9. The Ground of which Comfort and Support, he expresses ver. 10. Always bearing about in the Body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh; for we which live, are always delivered unto Death for Jesus sake, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh. And more clearly, ver. 13, 14. Having the same Spirit of Faith———, and knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. After which he returns to the Inference he began with in the first Verse; ver. 16. For which Cause we faint not, but though our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed Day by Day; for our light Affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory; while we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; for the Things which are seen, are Temporal; but the Things which are not seen, are Eternal.*

From

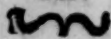
From this general Consideration of the Sermon. II.  
Certainty of a *future* Life, as a Ground of Support and Comfort under the Troubles of the *present*; he proceeds in the beginning of the fifth Chapter, to consider the particular Nature of *that Body* we shall be cloathed withal at the Resurrection; and of that intermediate State, the Soul will find it self in, between Death and Judgment. As to the Nature of our future *Body*, he tells us, *ver. 1.* that whereas our present *Body* is an *earthly House*, a Building fram'd out of the most perishable Materials, and of a Texture most frail and brittle; a *Tabernacle* tending perpetually in its own Nature by a gradual Decay towards a *Dissolution*; and during that short Period which it is capable of continuing, being every Moment liable to be destroy'd by sudden Violence, by the Power of Men, and by the Assaults of acute Diseases: The *Body* we shall have hereafter, shall on the contrary be a *Building of God*, an *House not made with Hands*, eternal in the Heavens; a *Body*, fram'd immediately by God himself, made capable of induring for ever, and fitted to the Circumstances and Enjoyments of that Place, which God has provided for it in the Heavens.

The frequent Meditation upon which happy State, causes good Men to groan earnestly,



Serm.

II.



*earnestly, v. 2. desiring to be cloathed upon with our House which is from Heaven; if so be that being cloathed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that Mortality might be swallow'd up of Life. This Passage some understand to refer to what the same Apostle informs us of, in the 15th Chapter of his foregoing Epistle, concerning those who shall be found alive at our Lord's second Coming; that they shall not die, but be changed; not be uncloath'd of this mortal Body, but cloath'd upon with their heavenly Habitation; and that the Apostle here expresses a Desire of escaping Death, and of being found among those, who, without becoming naked, without being separated from the Body at all, shall in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, be changed, or cloathed upon with an immortal and incorruptible Body. But there is no need of interpreting the Words to this Sense. For when the Apostle affirms that we are desirous, not to be uncloathed, but to be cloathed upon; not to be found naked, but to be cloathed upon with our House which is in Heaven; he does indeed prefer our State after the Resurrection, to the State of Separation; and represents good Men wishing to be deliver'd*

liver'd from the Burden of the Flesh, not merely for the sake of being separate from the Body, but chiefly and principally in Hopes of being cloathed with a better and more glorious one. But yet it does not therefore follow, that he meant to extend this Desire so far as to the escaping of Death wholly, and the avoiding to enter into the separate State at all; or that he thought this peculiar Circumstance of those who shall be found alive at the Lord's second Coming, could possibly be the Case of those who lived so early as in his own Time. Nay rather the contrary seems clearly to follow from the 6th Verse, and from the Words of the Text; where he speaks of *being absent from the Body*, as of a Thing that would certainly happen to them, and which was truly desireable to good Men; and the Expectation whereof was a Ground of *Confidence* and Support under the Troubles of Life, and against the Fears of Death: Because though the State after the Resurrection, when we shall be cloathed with incorruptible and immortal Bodies like unto our Saviour's glorious Body, shall be much more happy and desirable, than the State of Separation; yet that State of Separation it self, that imperfect and incomplete State, is far superior to our Condition in this World, and

D

more

Serm. more eligible than the Burden of the present Flesh. *Therefore we are always confident*, says he, *knowing that whilst we are at Home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord : (for we walk by Faith, not by Sight ; ) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.*

The Words are not well rendered, whilst we are at home in the Body. For this Body is not our proper Home ; we are only *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* in the present World ; and our Life is by St. Peter justly call'd, *The Time of our sojourning here*. But, whilst we dwell in the Body, (so the Words ought rather to be rendred,) or (as the same Word is translated in the following Verse,) *whilst we are present in the Body ; whilst we continue in this World ; we are absent from the Fountain of Life and Happiness : We are at a Distance from the heavenly Jerusalem, which is our proper Country ; we are absent from the Lord ; and live by Faith only, not by Sight*. But, God having given unto us the earnest of his holy Spirit, we are confident and have full Assurance of the Truth of these Things : We wean our selves therefore from the sensual Injoyments of the present World ; we support and comfort our selves with these Meditations, under the Troubles of

Life

Life, and against the Fears of Death; Serm.  
 we are *willing rather to be absent from the* II.  
*Body, ( whensoever it shall please God to*  
*release us; ) and to be present with the Lord,*  
 which is far better.

In the Words, and in the Context, we may observe the following Particulars plainly implied.

1<sup>st</sup>, That we must all shortly be *absent* or separate from this Body.

2<sup>dly</sup>, That this State of Separation, is not a State of absolute Insensibility.

3<sup>dly</sup>, That, to good Men, it is a State of great Happiness, a being *present with the Lord.*

4<sup>thly</sup>, That the Consideration of that intermediate Happiness, is a great Comfort and Support against the Fear of Death. *We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the Body.*

5<sup>thly</sup> and *Lastly*, That this intermediate State, tho' it may be a State of Happiness, yet is by no means equal to that Happiness, which good Men shall be possess'd of after the Resurrection. *For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that Mortality might be swallowed up of Life.*

1<sup>st</sup>, 'Tis supposed in the Words, that we must all shortly be *absent* or separate from this Body. 'Tis evident there is no need to *prove*, and one would think



Serm.

II.



there should be no need to *remind* Men, that they must all die ; when they have every Day such mournful Occasions as these, to excite their Consideration. Yet so it is, that even *this very Thing*, the *Frequency* of other Examples and the indisputable *Certainty* of their own Mortality, makes them stand in need of the more earnest Exhortations, to persuade them not to forget or neglect it. For as the strongest Objects that make perpetually an equal and continued Impression upon constant Presence, do affect us little more, than if they made no Impression upon the Sense at all ; and as those great *Phænomena* of Nature, which we observe to return in the constant Course of every Day, excite in us less Admiration, tho' in themselves the most wonderful of all the Works of God, than Things much less remarkable, which appear but seldom : So the absolute Certainty of our own Mortality, which leaves no Room for Inquiry or Debate, makes Men almost as much lay aside the Thoughts of it, as if the Certainty were on the other Side of the Question ; and the frequency of Instances which ought perpetually to remind us what we must speedily expect, does by a strange Carelessness and habitual Neglect, reconcile Men in such Manner to the Sight of Mortality in others, as if they

they themselves were not concern'd in the Sermon.  
 Example. They shake off the Thought II.  
 of it, as if there could be no Benefit in meditating upon what cannot be prevented; and they look upon it as importune and troublesome to remind them of that, which 'tis not possible but they must already know, yet that Knowledge, without Meditation, is like unto Ignorance; because it has no Effect, and makes no Impression. 'Tis like the speculative Knowledge of a Truth, which concerns us not: or like the habitual Understanding of a Demonstration, never recollected. The Reason of this great Stupidity, seems to be the Uncertainty of the *Time* of every Man's Death; which makes Men look upon Life, as a long indefinite Period; and, because the *Time* of their Death is *uncertain*, 'tis to them as an *Uncertainty* in the *Thing it self*. To prevent this Folly therefore, the Scripture is perpetually reminding us, and putting us upon considering, that *our Days on Earth are as a Shadow, and there is no abiding*, 1 Chron. xxix. 15; That *they are swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle*, Job. vii. 6. That *they are swifter than a Post*; that *they flee away as the swift Ships, as the Eagle that hasteth to the Prey*, Job. ix. 26. That they are as a *Sleep*, as a *Watch in the Night*, as a *Tale that is told*, Psal. xc. 5, 4, 9. That

Serm.

II.

our Life is a Vapour, that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanisbeth away. Jam. iv. 14. That Man cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a Shadow, and continueth not, Job. xiv. 2. In the Morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the Evening it is cut down and withereth, Psal. xc. 6. All which Similitudes are elegantly summ'd up together by the Author of the Book of Wisdom: Wisd. v. 9. All those Things are passed away like a Shadow, and as a Post that hasted by; and as a Ship that passeth over the Waves of the Water, which when it is gone by, the Trace thereof cannot be found, neither the Pathway of the Keel in the Waves; or as when a Bird has flown through the Air, there is no Token of her Way to be found——; or like as when an Arrow is shot at a Mark, it parteth the Air, which immediately cometh together again, so that a Man cannot know where it went thro'; even so we in like Manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our End, and have no Sign of Virtue to shew. These Descriptions of the Vanity and 'Transitoriness of human Life, are too evidently true, to stand in need of any Proof. Yet the Riches and Honours, the Pleasures and Allurements of the World, hinder Men too usually from considering them; and Men act as if they were

were to live here for ever. Providence therefore is very kind to us, in sending Afflictions upon us to awaken us out of this Lethargy; and we should be very wise and just to our selves, if we would suffer our selves to be brought to serious Consideration by the Troubles and Afflictions of others. When we see others taken out of the World before us, we know their Case must in a short Time of Necessity be our own; and the Concern we always see dying Persons under, should make us endeavour without Delay in the Time of our Health and Strength, to lay the Foundation of a good Conscience against the Day of Tryal. We are sure Eternity can never be very far distant from any of us; and we are always uncertain, but it may possibly be very near. And when Death approaches, Sickness and Pain are alone a Burden sufficient; and it will require all the Helps of Reason and Religion, all the Strength of the *Spirit of a Man*, to sustain at that Time the *Infirmities* of Nature. But if the *Spirit* it self be wounded; if the Conscience be distracted with too just Fears; if the great Work of Religion be then *undone*, and yet impossible to be *done*; if the *Spirit* of the Man, which should support him under his Infirmary, does it self much more stand in need of *Comfort and*

Serm.  
II.



Serm.

II.

*Support; who can bear it? This is the*  
 Time when all false Colours vanish, and  
 the great Difference and Distinction of  
 Men begins truly to appear. Now the  
 Profane, the Covetous, the Voluptuous,  
 the Mockers and Scoffers at Religion, be-  
 gins to judge by other Measures; and *if*  
*God should require some great Thing* of him,  
*would he not do it?* On the contrary,  
 the Sober and Pious, the Righteous and  
 Just Person, reflects then with unspeakable  
 Comfort upon his past Life, when he  
 remembers that he has either liv'd always  
 innocent from great Crimes; or at least  
 that the Sins of his Youth have not been  
 so great, as the Repentance and Obedi-  
 ence of his wiser Age. And when the  
 Vail is removed by Death, which trans-  
 mits these different Persons to that State,  
 where they are to wait for the final Sen-  
 tence of the unerring Judgment of God;  
 they themselves will judge still more and  
 more clearly concerning the true Nature  
 of Things, and of their own Deserts.  
 For Death is not a total Extinction of  
 the Man, but a Separation only of the  
 Soul from the Body for a Time. Which  
 was the next Particular I proposed to dis-  
 course of. And here, for Brevity's sake,  
 I shall put the

*Second and Third Particulars into one:*  
*viz. That the State of Separation, is not*  
 a State

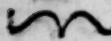
a State of absolute Insensibility, but to good Men a State of great Happiness, a being *present with the Lord*. All the *Natural Arguments*, (for the *Moral Arguments* indeed prove only a future State in general, by the Resurrection of the Body, or otherwise ; ) all the *Natural Arguments*, I say, which prove to us by Reason the Spirituality and Immortality of the Soul, seem to prove no less strongly, that the separate State is not a State of Sleep or Insensibility. For if it is a good Argument to conclude with Cicero ; *when I consider, says \* he, with what Swiftneſs of Thought the Soul is endued, with what a wonderful Memory of Things paſt, and Forecaſt of Things to come ; how many Arts, how many Sciences, how many wonderful Inventions it has found out ; I am perſuaded that That Nature, which is Poſſeſſor of ſuch Faculties, cannot be Mortal ; If this, I ſay, be a good Argument, (and a very excellent one it is ; ) it ſeems no leſs juſt to infer with Cyrus in Xenophon : I cannot imagine, ſaith † he, that the Soul* while

Serm.  
II.

\* Quid multa ? Sic mihi perſuaſi, ſic ſentio ; quum tanta celeritas animorum ſit, tanta memoria præteritorum, futurorum providentia, tot artes, tantæ ſcientiæ, tot inventa ; non poſſe eam naturam, quæ res eas contineat, eſſe mortalem. Cic. de ſenectute.

† Ουτοις ἐγώ γε, ὡς παρὰ τὸ τοῦ πάρος ἐπαύειν, ὥς ἡ ψυχὴ, ἕως ἀν' ἐν θνήσκῃ σώματι ἦ, ζῆ ὅταν ὃ τότε ἀπαλλαγῇ, τεθνήκεν. — Οὐδέ γε ὅπως ἀρεῶν ἔσται ἡ ψυχὴ

Serm. while it is in this mortal Body, lives; and

II.  that, when it is separated from it, then it should die: I cannot persuade my self that the Soul, by being separated from this Body, which is devoid of Sense, should thereupon become it self likewise devoid of Sense: On the contrary it seems to me more reasonable to believe, that when the Mind is separated from the Body, then it should become most of all sensible and intelligent. But these were only the reasonable Conjectures of wise and considering Men. The Scripture assures us with more Certainty and Authority, that *blest are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them*, Rev. xiv. 13. Which Rest, that it is not the mere Rest of utter Insensibility, may be gathered from ch. vi. v. 9, where 'tis said, *I saw under the Altar the Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud Voice, &c.* The same Thing is intimated to us by our Saviour, in the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*; where the Soul of *Lazarus* is represented as carry'd by Angels into

ψυχὴν πᾶσαν τὴν ἀρετὴν σώματι δὶχα γέννη, ὅδε τούτου πεπεισμαι. Ἀλλ' ὅταν ἀναστῇ ὁ καθ' αὐτὸν ὁ νῦν ἀναστῇ, τότε ὁ φρονιμώτατος ἐκὸς αὐτὸν εἶναι. Cyrus apud Xen.

*Abra-*

*Abraham's Bosom, and that he was comforted in that Place, Luke xvi, 22, 25.*

And more clearly yet, in his Promise to the Penitent Thief, *Luke xxiii. 43. Verily I say unto thee, to Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* To Day, that is,

immediately, in the State of Separation, before the Resurrection of Christ, and his Ascension into his Kingdom. St. Paul

had such a Notion of the Happiness of that State, that though his *abiding in the Flesh* he knew was better for the Church, yet he was in a Strait betwixt two, having a Desire to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better for himself, Phil. i.

23, 24. And in the Text he declares ;

*Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord ; for we walk by Faith, not by Sight : We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the*

*Lord.* The present Life he calls, *walking only by Faith* ; the State after Death, *walking by Sight, or being present with the Lord.* And accordingly all the best Writers in the Primitive Times, when they have Occasion to mention the State of good Men departed, always speak of them as being \* *in the Place appointed for them*

\* Εἰς τὸν ὁρελόμενον αἰῶνις τόπον εἰς ᾧ τῷ κυρίῳ  
Polycarpi Epist.



Serm. while it is in this mortal Body, lives; and  
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
Serm. *with the Lord ; as † beholding our Saviour*  
 II. *in Paradise, after such a Manner as they are*  
*worthy to behold him ; as being in a Place*  
*of Rest, Refreshment, Comfort, and Expect-*  
*ation of the Completion of their Happiness*  
*at the Resurrection. Directly contrary to*  
*the Innovations of the Church of Rome,*  
*who, without any Appearance of Reason,*  
*and without any Colour of Authority*  
*from Scripture, teach that the Souls of*  
*good Men are tormented in a Purgatory*  
*of imaginary Fire, very little differing*  
*from that of Hell it self. How much bet-*  
*ter does even a Jewish Writer express him-*  
*self upon this Subject! Wisd. iii. 1. The*  
*Souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of*  
*God, and there shall no Torment touch them.*  
*In the Sight of the Unwise they seemed to die*  
*and their Departure is taken for Misery ; and*  
*their going from us, to be utter Destruction ;*  
*but they are in Peace. For tho' they be pu-*  
*nish'd in the Sight of Men, yet is their Hope*  
*full of Immortality.*

4thly, The Consideration of the Soul's  
 intermediate Happiness in the separate  
 State, is a great Comfort and Support a-  
 gainst the Fear of Death : Therefore we are  
 confident, says the Apostle, and willing ra-  
 ther to be absent from the Body, and to be pre-  
 sent with the Lord. 'Tis some Degree of

† Παύλας γὰρ ὁ Σωτὴς ὁραῖος ἐστίν, καὶ οὐκ ὁραῖος. Irenæus, lib. 5.

Funeral of MARY Lady COOKE.

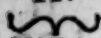
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Comfort against the Fear of Death, to Sermon.  
consider that it is the Necessity of Na- II.  
ture, and the Appointment of God to all   
Men; *Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto Men  
once to die.* 'Tis some further Degree of  
Support, to consider that Death is as it  
were the Haven of Rest, from the Storms  
and Troubles, the Calamities and Sorrows  
of the World: *Job. iii. 17. There the Wick-  
ed cease from troubling, and there the Weary  
be at Rest; there the Prisoners rest together,  
they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor: The  
Small and Great are there, and the Servant  
is free from his Master.* But after all the Ar-  
guments of Comfort that can be drawn from  
Reason and Philosophy, Death is still the  
*King of Terrors to Nature*, and is become  
*much more so thro' Sin.* But Christ has now,  
to all such as repent and truly amend, ta-  
ken away that *Sting*, and removed the  
*Fear*; having *destroyed him that had the  
Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and de-  
livered them, who thro' fear of Death, were  
all their Life-time subject to Bondage.* *Heb.  
ii. 15.* Death is now *abolished*, to all good  
Men, *2 Tim. i. 10.* and become nothing  
else but a *Passage* to a glorious Immorta-  
lity. And 'tis a great Addition of Com-  
fort and Support, to consider that even  
*that Passage* it self is not a *dark Passage*  
thro' a State of utter Insensibility; but a  
*being present with the Lord* in some Degree  
of



Serm. of Communication, and Fore-taste of a

II. more perfect Happiness.



The pious Lady, whose Death we now lament, took particular Satisfaction in meditating frequently upon this Subject; and in enquiring into the full Extent and Signification of those Texts, which relate to it. She made the holy Scriptures her daily Study and Delight, and was much conversant in many other excellent Books of Piety and Devotion: and the Comfort such Studies administer against the Fear of Death, is then truly effectual, when 'tis applied by such Persons, as are prepar'd to receive it by the preceding Course of a holy Life. For the Space of two Years wherein Providence allotted me to perform the Duties of my Ministry in the Parish wherein she dwelt, (and wherein I receiv'd singular Favours, particularly from the eminent Society for the Profession and Practice of the Civil-Law, which ought always gratefully to be acknowledged;) I was my self a Witness of her constant and never-failing Attendance upon the publick Service of God, and the Administration of the Sacrament, with the most exemplary Zeal and Devotion: And, in all the Opportunities I had of observing it, her private Conversation appear'd perfectly agreeable to her religious Behaviour in publick. Which, in a Person  
in

in the Strength and Vigour of her Age, Sermon. II.  
very little exceeding thirty Years at the Time of her Death, is *an Example* that may be recommended with Justice and Usefulness. But to enlarge too far upon Characters even of such truly pious Persons, is neither giving any real Advantage to the Memory of the Dead, nor of so much Benefit to the Living, as the exhorting them upon these Occasions to prepare themselves for Death, which they are all hastning to, by setting before their Eyes continually the most perfect Example of Christ, and the Precepts of the Gospel; in following of which, all good and holy Men and Women who have gone before us, have obtain'd a good Report.

5thly and *Lastly*. The intermediate State of Separation, though it may be a State of great Happiness, yet is by no Means equal to that Happiness, which good Men shall be possess'd of after the Resurrection: *For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burden'd; not for that we would be uncloath'd, but cloath'd upon, that Mortality might be swallow'd up of Life.* St. Paul, tho' he knew, that when he was *absent from the Body*, he should be *present with the Lord*, in a State of Rest and Security and perfect Assurance, in a State of great Happiness and Joy unspeakable; yet tells us, that the  
Crown

Serm. *Crown of Righteousness* was laid up for  
 II. him, not to be given him by the *Righteous Judge* before *that great Day*. And our Saviour himself bids the charitable Person expect his final *Recompence*, at the *Resurrection of the Just*. And in the Place before-cited, the Souls of the *Martyrs* themselves, which St. *John* saw in his Vision under the Altar, are represented as in a State of Expectation only; *How long, O Lord, Holy and True, &c.* Rev. ix. 7. *And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little Season, until their Fellow-Servants also, and their Brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.* In a Word, the Souls of the Righteous are doubtless as happy, as they can be in that imperfect State of Separation from their Bodies: But 'tis after the Resurrection only, that their Happiness shall be complete, and that they shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father; When our Lord shall have changed this vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body; according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all Things unto himself: That is, when this Body, which has now in it such manifest Principles of Mortality and Corruption; which consists now of such brittle and tender Parts, that every the least Violence disturbs and unfits them for  
 their

their Operations ; when *this Body*, Sermon. II. which is now so weak and feeble, so dull, heavy and unactive, that it clogs the Soul, and retards and hinders its spiritual Operations ; when *this Body*, which is now subject to so many Casualties, and has its Continuance depending upon the fit Disposition of so many little and easily disorder'd Parts, that 'tis a greater Wonder how we continue to live a Day, than why we die after so few Years Space ; *shall* be perfectly refin'd and purged from all the Seeds of Mortality and Corruption ; *shall* spring up into an incorruptible and immortal Substance, which shall be fitted to endure as long as the Soul to which it is to be united, even to all Eternity ; *shall* become so Strong and Powerful, so Active and Vigorous, as even to be assisting to the most spiritual Motions of the Soul, to become every Way a fit Organ and Instrument of its most exalted Operations ; and *shall* continue in this perfect Health, Strength and Vigour for ever. For God *shall* wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow nor Crying, neither shall there



Serm. *be any more Pain ; for the former Things*  
 II. *are pass'd away.*



To which happy State, that we  
 may all arrive, God of his in-  
 finite Mercy grant, &c.



A SER-

A

# SERMON

Preach'd before the *Honourable House of Commons*, at the Church of *St. Margaret, Westminster*: On *Tuesday, Nov. 22, 1709*. Being the Day of Thanksgiving for the Signal and Glorious Victory obtained near *Mons*, and for the other great Successes of Her Majesty's Arms, this last Year, under the Command of the Duke of *Marlborough*.

PSAL. L. 23:

*Whoſo offereth Praise, glorifies me; and to him that ordereth his Converſation aright, will I ſhew the Salvation of God.*

**T**HERE is no Nation under Heaven, ſince the Times of God's governing the *Jews* by an immediate Theocracy, that has ſeen more and

Serm.  
III.


Serm. clearer Instances of the Interposition of

III. Providence on their behalf, or has had  
 greater Blessings and Means of publick Prosperity put into their Hands; than we of this Nation have had. As *the Hills stand about Jerusalem*, said the Psalmist, (Psal. cxxv. 2.) *even so standeth the Lord round about his People*: As *the Seas encompass our Land*, may we no less justly say, even so does the Protection of Providence surround us on all Sides. We have enjoyed a long and uninterrupted Succession of the Blessings of Heaven from above, and of the Earth beneath; of fruitful Seasons, and a large and plentiful Increase. We have lived under a secure Establishment of all our private Rights and just Liberties, in a wise and well-constituted Government, and in the regular Execution of good and wholesome Laws. We have had the free Exercise of our Religion continued almost to us alone, when so many of those about us have been deprived of that inestimable Liberty. We have had Deliverances little less than miraculous, frequently vouchsafed us; and have seen many visible Interpositions of Providence, in causing such Concurrences of Circumstances for our Advantage, as no humane Wisdom could either foresee, direct, or over-rule.

When

When, after a long Establishment of Serm.  
our Peace and Prosperity, we, like Je- III.  
*shurun, waxed fat and kicked*; when our Deut.  
Prosperity made us wanton, and we for- xxxii. 15.  
gat God who *poured these Benefits upon*  
us; when Corruption of Manners pre-  
vailed over the Purity of our Religion,  
and we grew cool in our Zeal for the Ser-  
vice of God, and for the Honour of his  
Laws; then did it please God to  
*threaten* us with the Rod of arbitrary  
Power, and with the Fears of Popish  
Slavery; to awaken us out of our care-  
less Neglect of Religion, and to compose  
our little Differences and unchristian  
Animosities among ourselves. Yet did  
he *threaten* us only with these Judg-  
ments, and show us the Terroure of them  
as it were at a Distance, but did not suf-  
fer them to prevail over us; removing  
them from us by an unparalleled De-  
liverance, almost as soon as they ap-  
proached, and that we began to feel the  
Smart of them. And from the Time of  
that wonderful Deliverance, even unto  
this Day, has God continued to bless  
us with *Successes Abroad* under victorious  
Armies, and with *Peace and Plenty at*  
*Home*, under pious and religious Princes.  
A great and always perpetual Series of  
Successes has attended *our Arms*, through



Serm. the various Events and Hazards of a  
III. long, bloody, and expensive War; a-  
gainst the deep Counsels, and formi-  
dable Strength, of a cunning, potent,  
and formerly long-successful Enemy.  
And at the same Time, *we our selves*  
sit every Man *under his Vine, and under*  
*his Fig-tree*, in the secure and peaceable  
Enjoyment of whatever each one has a  
Right to possess. We enjoy almost all  
the Happiness and Blessings of *Peace*,  
even in the midst of a vigorous and  
bloody *War*; while the Sword and Fire  
consume round about us, and other fruit-  
ful Countries are ravaged and destroy-  
ed; while *Thousands fall beside us, and*  
*ten Thousands at our Right-hand*, and  
yet Providence protects us, that it *comes*  
*not nigh us*; while Want and Famine  
spread Desolation among our Neigh-  
bours, and Pestilence at a Distance  
threatens still severer Judgments of God.  
We are not liable to be perpetually  
spoiled, by the Violence of Arbitrary  
Power; and to be daily bereaved of our  
nearest and most valuable Rights, at  
the mere Will and Pleasure of a lawless  
Oppressor: But under the happy Influ-  
ences of a mild and most auspicious  
Government, and under the Protection  
of wise and good Laws, we enjoy as  
much

much Liberty as can be desired by Any, Serm.  
 who aim not at the Confusions of unli- III.  
 mited Licentiousness. And to com-  
 plete this Happiness, we are *not only*  
*allowed* the free Exercise of the Reform-  
 ed Religion, (which under some Go-  
 vernments who call themselves *Christian*,  
 is persecuted even unto Death: and  
 which we all remember the Time, when  
 we had great Reason to apprehend we  
 should have been deprived of it;) but the  
*Profession* of it is moreover encouraged  
 by *Law*, and the *Practice* of it recom-  
 mended not only by the Command, but  
 (which is of greater Influence) by the  
 hearty Example also, of our pious and  
 most religious Queen; who *in every*  
*Work that she begins in the Service of the*  
*House of God, and in the Law, and in*  
*the Commandments, to seek her God, she*  
*does it with all her Heart, and prospers,*  
 2 Chron. xxxi. 21.

*Queen*  
*Anne* }

If these be Things which are the pro-  
 per Subjects of Praise and Thanksgiving,  
 and call for the heartiest Expressions of  
 our Gratitude to *him who redeemeth*  
*our Life from Destruction, and crown-*  
*eth us with Mercy and Loving-kind-*  
*ness*; undoubtedly there is no Nation  
 under the Sun, that hath more Reason

Serm. this Day, than we, to say, *What shall I*

III. *render unto the Lord for all his Bene-*

Pfal. cxvi. *fits that he has done unto me? I will*

12, 17. *offer to him the Sacrifice of Thanksgi-*

Pfal. cvii. *ving, and will call upon the Name of*

8. *the Lord. And O! that Men would*

indeed, with their Mouths and from  
their Hearts, by the Confession of their  
Lips, and in the Actions of their Lives,  
therefore praise the Lord for his Good-

ver. 32. *ness, and declare the Wonders that he*

*doth for the Children of Men! That*

*they would exalt him also in the Con-*

*gregation of the People, and praise him*

*in the Seat of the Elders! That there*

*were in all of us such a Heart, that*

*by making suitable Returns of Praise and*

*Obedience to God, for his past and*

*present Benefits; we might shew our*

*selves worthy of the Continuance of*

*his Favour, and secure for the future*

*the same Blessings, to ourselves and*

*our Posterity! Could we but prevail*

*with our selves, not to abuse that Plen-*

*ty wherewith God has blessed us, by In-*

*temperance and Debauchery: Could*

*we in the midst of that Peace, which*

*we enjoy even while War surrounds*

*us, forbear unreasonable Contentions,*

*and lay aside all our Unchristian Heats*

*and*

and Animosities among our selves: Serm.  
Could we but use that Liberty we most III.  
justly value and boast of, so as not to  
abuse it to Licentiousness and Wanton-  
ness: Could we but in any Measure per-  
suade ourselves to *practise* the Re-  
ligion, we are so zealous to *profess*,  
and banish from a *Christian* and a *re-*  
*formed* Nation, Infidelity, Profaneness,  
and Immorality: In a Word, could we  
but find in our Hearts to *glorify* God  
worthily for his great Mercies, and offer  
him Praises suitable to the wonderful  
Works which he has done for us;  
that is, *Praises* accompanied with the  
Works of Righteousness, so as to *honour*  
him indeed; this would be truly such  
an *ordering our Conversation aright*,  
that we might with good Grounds hope  
to have the Promise in the Text ful-  
filled upon our selves; and, by the Con-  
tinuance of the same, and the Addition  
of more Blessings, might *see* compleated  
in us *the Salvation of God*. *Who so*  
*offereth Praise, glorifies me; and to*  
*him that ordereth his Conversation a-*  
*right, will I shew the Salvation of*  
*God*.

In the Words we may observe these  
four Things.

I. That



Serm.

III. 1. That God is to be glorified or  
honoured in all our Actions. He glorifies me.

2. That, more particularly, upon Occasion of any great Mercy, any remarkable Blessing, or signal Interposition of Providence on our Behalf; we ought to show forth his Glory by the most publick Acknowledgments, by the heartiest Praises and Thanksgivings to him. *Whofo offereth Praise, glorifies me.*

3. That he who will return Thanks to God acceptably for past Mercies, so as to glorify him indeed; must for the future live suitably to the Profession he publickly makes, of his Sense of God's Providence governing the World, and of his entire Dependence upon it. *To him that ordereth his Conversation aright.*

4. That to them who thus order their Conversation aright, here is a Promise added, of still farther Blessings. *I will shew them the Salvation of God.*

1. That God is to be glorified or honoured in all our Actions. This is implied in those Words, *he glorifies me.* For, the declaring in what Manner, or by what Actions God is most glorified; and who the Persons are, that do most truly


truly honour him ; is presupposing the Sermon.  
Knowledge and Obligation of the Duty III.  
it self, that *God is to be glorified or honoured in all our Actions* : That  
is, *that we are at all Times, and in all Places, to have a constant Regard to him, and Dependence upon him ; to have a perpetual Sense of him upon our Minds, and to make continual Acknowledgments to him upon all proper Occasions ; that he is the Author and Preserver of our Life and Being ; that on him we rely, for all the good Things we hope for ; and by his Permission, by his Grace and Favour, injoy whatever Good we at present possess ; that to him all possible Praise and Thanksgiving is due, for the Prosperity or Success we at any Time meet with, either in our private, or in the publick Affairs ; that by Him Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice ; that His Blessing is upon a Nation, whenever pious Princes are established upon the Throne, and their Affairs prosper under a wise Administration, and Success accompanies their Arms abroad, and Peace and Plenty crowns their Endeavours at Home. On the contrary, that ill Success in any of our Undertakings ; the blasting and defeating any*  
of

Serm.

III.

W

of our Designs ; the Calamities and Afflictions, of whatever Kind they be, that at any Time fall upon us, are still the Strokes of the same Hand, the Appointment of the same wise Providence, the good Pleasure of the same Supreme Governour and Director of all Things ; designed for our Correction and Improvement to withdraw our Affections from Vanity and Trust in the World, and to lead us to Repentance and Amendment. This is, according to the wise Man's Advice, *Acknowledging God in all our Ways* : This is promoting a true Sense of Religion and Piety in the World : This is *honouring and glorifying God*. For, *the Glory of God*, is not any Thing accruing to *God himself* ; 'tis not any Addition to *his* Greatness or Happiness, or any Accession to the Perfections of *his* Nature. But as the true Glory of a *Prince*, is the *Obedience* and the *Prosperity* of his Subjects : so the true Notion of the *Glory of God*, is nothing else but the advancing and establishing his *Kingdom* among *Men*. And the *Kingdom of God*, saith St. Paul, is, *Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. 'Tis something *within* our selves, as our Saviour affirms, St. Luke

xvii. 21. 'Tis the Conformity of the Serm.  
 Creature to the Nature and Life of III.  
 God, to the Law and Happiness of Hea-  
 ven, by the Obedience of the Gospel,   
 and by the Reconciliation of their Na-  
 ture to the eternal and unchangeable  
 Law of Righteousness and Holiness.  
 Promoting the *Glory of God* therefore,  
 is nothing else but advancing the In-  
 terest of true Religion, and promoting  
 the Practice of Virtue in the World.  
 For, as Irreligion and Neglect of God,  
 Profaneness or any vitious Practice  
 in those who pretend to believe; do  
 (as is said in the Case of *David*) give <sup>2 Sam. xii.</sup>  
*great Occasion to the Enemies of God* <sup>14.</sup>  
*to blaspheme*; and they who *make*  
*their boast in the Law*, as *St. Paul* <sup>Rom. ii.</sup>  
 expresses it, do, by *Transgressing the* <sup>23.</sup>  
*Law, dishonour God*; and the *Name*  
*of God is through them blasphemed a-*  
*mong Unbelievers*: So, on the con-  
 trary, they who, by unfeigned Piety  
 and Regard to God in the whole Course  
 of their Lives, make *their Light* <sup>to Mat. v. 16.</sup>  
*shine before Men*; do, by letting others  
*see their good Works*, cause Men to *glo-*  
*rify their Father which is in Heaven*:  
 That is, they bring other Men over to  
 a true Sense of Religion, and persuade  
 them to have a just Value and Esteem  
 for



V Sermon. for it. This is the true Notion of the *Glo-*  
 III. *ry of God: This is doing all Things for his*  
 Honour and Glory. And in this Sense  
 'tis manifest it is our indispensable Duty,  
 to honour and glorify God in all our *Acti-*  
*ons*; by keeping up in our own Minds  
 a constant Sense of him, of his Power  
 and Greatness, of his Wisdom, and Pro-  
 vidence in governing the World, and dis-  
 posing of all Events; and, as much as in  
 us lies, exciting the same Sense of him,  
 and Dependence upon him, in the Minds  
 of others likewise.

2. As God is in some Measure to be  
 honoured or glorified by all our *Actions*  
 in general; so more particularly, upon  
 Occasion of any great *Mercy or Deli-*  
*verance*, upon Occasion of any remarkable  
*Blessing*, or signal *Interposition of Provi-*  
*dence on our Behalf*, we ought to show  
 forth his Glory by the most publick *Ac-*  
*knowledgments*, by the highest Expressions  
 of our Gratitude, by the heartiest *Praises*  
 and *Thanksgivings* to him. *Whoso offer-*  
*eth Praise, glorifies me*; Or, as it is  
 in the former Translation, *Whoso offer-*  
*eth me Thanks and Praise, he honoureth*  
*me*. 'Tis all the Return, that weak  
 and dependent Creatures are capable of  
 making, to the supreme Lord and Gover-  
 nour of all Things; and therefore he is  
 graci-

graciously pleased to accept it, as a sufficient *Reward for all the Benefits that he has done unto us.* Our Goodness extendeth not to him, Psal. xvi. 2. neither can *Man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself,* Job. xxii. 12. But tho' we cannot make him any Return for his Benefits, yet *thankful* to him for them we can be; and most inexcusable are we, if we neglect to be so. All that we are able to do, is to make humble Acknowledgments of the Mercies we receive from him; and therefore we ought to do it in the gratefulest, and in the most publick and hearty manner we can. Adversity and Afflictions, such Corrections and Chastisements as his fatherly Hand thinks fit at any Time to lay upon us, it becomes us to bear with patient Submission, and silent Resignation to his Will; as being just Reproofs for our Sins, and Calls to Reformation and Repentance: But Blessings and Instances of Mercy, especially publick and national Blessings, call for publick Acknowledgments in such Expressions of Praise and Gratitude, as may declare to the World our being duly sensible from what Hand they come. Upon Account of the Works of *Creation*, all, even inanimate Creatures, are in Scripture called upon

Serm.

III.

Serm. to praise the Lord; that is, to contribute  
 III. Matter, and afford perpetual Occasion  
 by the Meditation of them, to all rational  
 Creatures to sing his Praises; *Praise him*  
 (that is, afford continual subject-matter  
 for his Praises) *O ye Sun and Moon;*

Ps. cxlviii. 3. *praise him all ye Stars of Light, &c.* The  
 Works of Providence, are no less great  
 and conspicuous, than those of Creation;  
 and for these Works, Men, who are chief-  
 ly and most immediately concern'd in  
 them, and who alone are able to discern  
 and judge of them, are in Scripture re-  
 quired perpetually to praise him: To  
 praise him perpetually; because the Num-  
 ber and Variety of them is so great, that  
 no Tongue can worthily or sufficiently ex-  
 tol them: *Who can express the noble Acts of*  
 Ps. cvii. 2. *the Lord, or show forth all his Praises?*

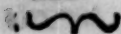
'Tis the least that any reasonable Per-  
 son can do, in return for great Benefits;  
 to make a thankful Acknowledgment of  
 them, to *him* from whom he receiv'd  
 them. And yet because 'tis *all*, (as I  
 before observ'd) that weak and dependent  
 Creatures *can* pay to *him* who is absolute  
 Lord of all Things; therefore, when  
 it proceeds from a sincere Mind and  
 hearty Affection, 'tis accepted by him  
 as the most valuable Sacrifice. *Ver. 9.*  
*of this 50th Psalm; I will take no Bul-*  
*lock,*

*lock, faith God, out of thy House, nor He-goats out of thy Fold; for all the Beasts of the Forest are mine, and so are the Cattle upon a thousand Hills: Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats? No: But offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the Day of Trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Again, Psal. cxvi. 12, 17. What shall I render unto the Lord, for all the Benefits that he has done unto me? I will offer to him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and will call upon the Name of the Lord. And Psal. lxix. 30, 31. I will praise the Name of God with a Song, and will magnify him with Thanksgiving: This also shall please the Lord, better than a Bullock that has Horns and Hoofs, The same Notion is very elegantly expressed by the Prophet Hosea, ch. xiv. ver. 2. We will render the Calves of our Lips; i. e. We will return to God such hearty Thanks for his Mercies, as shall be more acceptable to him than the Sacrifices of Calves or Sheep. The Phrase is translated by the LXX, the Fruit of our Lips: And so St. Paul cites it, Heb. xiii. 15. Let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually; that is, the Fruit of our Lips, giving Thanks to his Name.*




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The Obligation to this Duty, is so evident and so reasonable, that it is sometimes in Scripture put for the whole of Religion ; and the Neglect of it, marked as a total Defection from God. Thus *St. Paul, Rom. i. 21.* describing the inexcusable Corruption of the Heathen World, put it principally upon this ; *because, that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were Thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkned.* They could not but know God, by his Works ; yet they were not *Thankful*, nor glorified him according to that Knowledge ; *therefore, says the Apostle, they are without Excuse.* The plainer and more obvious the Duty is, and the more fully God has declared his Acceptance of it, to *Us* who enjoy the Advantage of Revelation ; the more unworthy still, and the more inexcusable, is *Unthankfulness* and Neglect of him. 'Tis the perpetual Complaint of the Prophets in the Old Testament, that after all the great Things that God had done for the Nation of the *Jews*, their Ingratitude was most provoking to him ; *He made them ride on the high Places of the Earth, that they might eat the Increase of the Fields, and suck Honey out*  
of

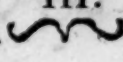
of the Rock, and Oyl out of the flinty Serm.  
 Rock: ——— But Jeshurun waxed fat III.  
 and kicked; ——— he soon forsook the God   
 which made him, and lightly esteemed the  
 Rock of his Salvation, Deut. xxxii. 13.  
 And 'tis recorded of a great and good  
 King; one, concerning whom the Scrip-  
 ture testifies, that in other Things he did <sup>2 Kings,</sup>  
 that which was right in the Sight of the Lord, <sup>xviii. 3. 9.</sup>  
 so that before him there was none e-  
 qual to him, neither after him arose there  
 any like him; 'tis noted of Him, even of  
 good King Hezekiah, as a very great  
 Blemish, as a Thing very unnatural and  
 unbecoming him, and at which God  
 was highly displeased; that after the  
 Lord had destroy'd his Enemies, by send-  
 ing an Angel which cut off all the mighty  
 Men of Valour, and the Leaders and Cap-  
 tains in the Camp of the King of Assyria;  
 and after he had miraculously caused him  
 to recover from a mortal Disease; yet  
 he rendred not again according to the Bene-  
 fit done unto him; for his Heart was  
 lifted up; therefore there was Wrath up-  
 on him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem, 2  
 Chron. xxxii. 21, 25.

The many wonderful Victories that  
 God has granted Us, over the Armies of  
 a Prince more Potent than the King of

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*Affyria*; and who has often thought to swallow us up more easily, than *Sennacherib* did to destroy *Jerusalem*, and overrun the Land of *Judea*; the many wonderful Victories, I say, which God has given *Us*, and particularly the great Successes wherewith he has blessed us this present Year, and for which we are now met together to return him Thanks; are such as will set as great or a greater Mark of Ingratitude upon us, if our real Thankfulness be not answerable to our outward Expressions of Joy, and our consequent Behaviour suitable to both.

The Fatigue and Length of the foregoing Campaign, which had been drawn out into the very midst of Winter; the extreme Rigour of the ensuing Season, and the Backwardness of the Spring, which occasion'd such a Scarcity of Forage, that it was impossible to open the Campaign before the Summer was far spent; and at the same Time the Artifices made use of by our Enemies to amuse us with false Appearances and deceitful Insinuations of their Desire of Peace, and to try if from thence Means might be found to create any Divisions or Jealousies among the Allies; gave some Hopes to *France*, that they should have been able to avoid the Blow where-  
with

with they were threatned; and that, by Serm. gaining Time, they might, at least for **III.** this Summer, have escaped the Danger  to which by their former Losses they seem'd to be exposed. But the Providence of God, directing our Counsels, the Unanimity and Steadiness of the Allies, the Prudence and Vigilance of our Generals, and the Indefatigableness of our Troops, entirely disappointed the Enemies Expectation: And the Campaign began with the taking of one of the strongest Fortresses in *Europe*; in the fortifying of which, no Pains, no Cost had been spared, for a Trial how far it was possible to increase Strength by the Perfection of Art. To prevent further Losses of this Kind, the Enemy resolved to hazard a Battle; yet in such Circumstances, that, according to the usual Measure and Judgment of Events in War, they thought themselves to run no *hazard*. But in the Issue it appear'd, that though the Courage and Conduct of our Generals, whose Greatness as no History can parallel, so no Character can do Justice to, and thro' the Bravery and Intrepidity of our Troops, which as no Difficulties can withstand, so no Words can sufficiently express; those mighty In-



Serm. trenchments, those double and treble De-  
 III. fences, wherein the Enemies thought  
 themselves so secure, served only to in-  
 crease the Glory of the Arms of the Al-  
 lies, and to convince the Enemy how  
 little Hopes remained of their ever gain-  
 ing any Advantage over those Troops  
 upon equal Ground, against whom they  
 could not defend themselves upon the  
 most unequal. Nevertheless, according  
 to their usual Vanity, they boasted of a  
 Victory; unless we will rather ascribe it  
 to their beginning to put on some Degree  
 of *Majesty*, when they declare they esteem  
 it the noblest Atchievement and the  
 greatest Height of their Glory, to have  
 been able to make a *Retreat* after being  
 beaten with *less Loss than usual*. But in a  
 Matter of this Nature, 'tis not of so much  
 Importance what *Representations*, what  
*artful Descriptions* may be made of the  
 Action itself: 'Tis the *Effect*, the *Conse-*  
*quences* of great Actions, that afford the  
 truest Judgment of the Greatness of the  
 Success. And here it was sufficiently evi-  
 dent *on which Side*, and to *what Degree*  
 Victory declar'd itself; when the imme-  
 diate Consequence of the Battle, was the  
 laying Siege to another strong Town,  
 and the taking it in a short Time with-  
 out the Enemy's being in a Condition so  
 much

much as to offer at any Attempt of coming to its Relief.

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For these great and continued Successes, wherewith the Providence of God has vouchsafed to bless us, let us make thankful Acknowledgment to his divine Majesty, in the Words of David, 1 Chron. xxix. 11. *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty; for all that is in the Heaven, and in the Earth, is thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine Hand is Power and Might, and in thine Hand it is to make Great, and to give Strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious Name.*

To neglect acknowledging the Hand of Providence in these great Events, would be not only base *Ingratitude* and *Unworthiness*, but also the greatest and most inexcusable *Inconsiderateness*. For since *the Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*; since the wisest Counsels do not always prosper, nor the best laid Designs constantly take Effect; but the Providence of God overrules all Events, by secret and undiscern'd Springs;

Serm. Springs; 'tis to his Blessing wholly, we  
 III. must thankfully acknowledge, that even  
 W the best concerted Measures owe their  
 Success. 'Tis by his Blessing, that *Unan-*  
*imity* is preserv'd among the *Allies*,  
 that *Generals* are inspir'd with *Wisdom*,  
 and *Troops* with *Undauntedness* and *Bra-*  
*very*; And this by the Continuance of  
 the same Blessing, that *that Unanimity*,  
*Conduct* and *Courage*, are attended with  
 Success. *Unanimity* has been, with the  
 greatest Advantage, on our Enemies Side:  
 Their Soldiers sometimes have not been  
 void of *Bravery*, nor their *Generals* of  
*Skill*: Yet have they been defeated in  
 Battle after Battle, till the Strength of  
 the potentest Monarch upon Earth has  
 been almost entirely broken, and his  
 Power reduc'd to an Extremity of Dis-  
 tress. *The King shall mourn, and the*  
 Ezek. vii. *Prince shall be cloathed with Desolation,*  
 27. *and the Hands of the People of the Land*  
*shall be troubled; I will do unto them after*  
*their Way, and according to their Deserts*  
 Isa. xli. 20. *will I judge them: That they may see,*  
*and know, and consider, and understand to-*  
*gether, that the Hand of the Lord*  
*has done this, and the Holy One of Israel*  
*has created it: That they may know that*  
 Ps. cix. 27. *this is thy Hand, and that thou, Lord, hast*  
*done it.*

Nor

Nor ought it to be omitted, that, Serm. III.  
 next under God who is the first Author W  
 of all Victory, all due Honour and Ac-  
 knowledgment is to be paid to the *In-*  
*struments*, by which our Successes have  
 been accomplish'd; the Wisdom and  
 Conduct of the Generals, and the Bra-  
 very of those who executed their Com-  
 mands. For, tho' Providence has in-  
 deed, in the whole Course of this War,  
 very signally interpos'd in our Behalf;  
 yet not by immediate Miracle, as in the  
 Days of *Jehosaphat* King of *Judab*, when  
 it was said to them by the Prophet, 2  
 Chron. xx. 17. *Ye shall not need to fight*  
*in this Battle, set your selves, stand ye*  
*still, and see the Salvation of the Lord.*  
 But the Blessings of Providence are con-  
 vey'd to *Us*, thro' the Wisdom and Dili-  
 gence of second Causes. For as, on the  
 one Hand without the Blessing of Provi-  
 dence, the greatest Wisdom of Man is  
 Folly, and his Strength Weakness; and  
*a Horse is counted but a vain Thing to* ps. xxxiii.  
*save a Man, neither shall it deliver any* 17.  
*Man by its great Strength:* So neither  
 on the other Hand have we now any  
 Reason to expect, that Providence, will  
 work for us direct Miracles, but only  
 bless the Endeavours of subordinate Cau-  
 ses. Wherefore all due Acknowledg-  
 ments



Serm. ments ought to be made to the Instru-  
 III. ments, by whose Means we are deliver'd  
 from our Enemies, and by whose Hands  
 is work'd for us *the Salvation of God.*  
 And 'tis noted in Scripture as a great  
 Reproach upon the Children of *Israel*,  
 that they were sometimes ungrateful to  
 the Persons by whom God had work'd  
 their Deliverance, and that they remem-  
 ber'd 'em not *according to all the Goodness*  
*that they had shew'd unto Israel, Judg.*  
*viii. 35.*

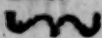
3. He that will *return Thanks* to God  
 acceptably for past Mercies, so as to *glo-*  
*rify him indeed* ; must for the future *live*  
*suitably* to that Profession he pretends to  
 make, of his Sense of God's Providence  
 in governing the World, and of his entire  
 Dependence upon it. *To him that order-*  
*eth his Conversation aright.* The Expres-  
 sions of our present Joy, must be such as  
 become the Gospel of Christ ; and the fol-  
 lowing Part of our Lives must show, that  
 our Praises proceed not out of feigned  
 Lips, publick Praises and Thanksgivings  
 are acceptable to God, as Part of our Re-  
 ligious Worship and Adoration of him ;  
 but 'tis then only so, when the Declara-  
 tions of our Mouths are the real Signifi-  
 cations of the Intentions of our Hearts,  
 and our Designs are not to abuse those  
 Mercies which we thank him for. We  
 must

must so return our Thanks for past Mercies, as that, by their having a due Influence upon us, we may show our selves worthy of the Continuance of them, and of God's bestowing still more upon us; and then our Praise will be indeed an acceptable Sacrifice. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye RIGHTEOUS*, saith the Psalmist; *for it becometh well the Just to be thankful*, Psal. xxxi. 1. But of the *Wicked* it may truly be affirm'd, that as their *Prayer*, so their *Praise* also is an *Abomination to the Lord*. Serm. III.

4. To them who thus order their Conversation aright, here is a Promise added of yet farther Blessings: *I will shew them the Salvation of God*. They who worthily express their Thanks for past Mercies, not by debauch'd and unseemly Mirth, but by truly honouring and fearing God, may reasonably hope for more Occasions of praising him. If ye be *Willing and Obedient*, ye shall eat the Fat of the Land; and the Lord will delight to do you good. Our Praises and Thanksgivings for past Victories, if accompany'd with sincere Obedience, will be, like the lifting up of *Moses's* Hands upon the Mount, a certain Evidence of future Success. God has already blest the Endeavours of our pious Queen with so great Prof- Isa. i. 19. Exod. xvii. II.

Serm.

III.



Prosperity, that we may justly say with the Psalmist, *Psal. xx. 6. Now know I that the Lord helpeth his Anointed, and will hear him from his holy Heaven, even with the wholesome Strength of his right Hand. Some put their Trust in Chariots, and some in Horses, but we will remember the Name of our Lord our God: They are brought down and fallen, but we are risen and stand upright.* Nay, we have reasonable Grounds to apply to our Enemies the Prophet *Nabum's Lamentation over the King of Assyria, ch. iii. v. 19. There is no healing of thy Bruise, thy Wound is grievous; all that hear the Bruit of thee, shall clap their Hands over thee; for upon whom has not thy Wickedness pass'd continually? Or that of the Prophet Isaiah, ch, xiv. v. 16. They that see thee, shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the Man that made the Earth to tremble? That did shake Kingdoms? That made the World as a Wilderness, and destroy'd the Cities thereof? That open'd not the House of his Prisoners? The sudden breaking of so great a Power, shows how easily Providence, if we prove ungrateful to him, can even yet disappoint our most probable Hopes, and, after all our Successes, bring us to Confusion. But the Example of Piety set us from the Throne, will, we hope, so effectually dis-*

discourage all Immorality and Profane-  
ness, and by spreading its Influence afar,  
excite in the Nation such a Spirit of Vir-  
tue and true Religion, that God may be  
intreated of us *to continue* to bless us with  
Success, 'till the present bloody and ex-  
pensive War terminates in such a Peace,  
as may establish upon a lasting Foot the  
Liberties of Europe. *The humble shall see* <sup>Psa. xxxiv.</sup>  
*this, and be glad: And their Heart shall*  
*live, that seek God: For God will save* <sup>Psal. xlix.</sup>  
*Sion, and build the Cities of Judah, that* <sup>35.</sup>  
*Men may dwell there, and have it in Pos-*  
*session: The Posterity also of his Servants*  
*shall inherit it; and they that love his Name,*  
*shall dwell therein.*

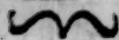
I add only a Word of Exhortation, and  
so conclude.

The Ground of our Rejoycing, and  
returning Thanks to God for the Succes-  
ses of the present War, is, that those  
Successes tend to secure to us the Ends,  
for which the War was at first underta-  
ken, viz. the *procuring a safe and lasting*  
*Peace, the Support and Establishment of*  
*the present Constitution of our Government,*  
*the maintaining the Rights and Liberties of*  
*our selves and all Europe, and the*  
*Preservation of the Protestant Religion*  
*among us.*



Serm.

III.



*First* therefore, if we will shew ourselves truly thankful for the Successes of the War, let us endeavour to maintain such Unanimity among our selves, as may convince our Enemies they can have no Hopes of putting an End to the War, but by consenting to such a *Peace*, as may be *safe and lasting*. And let us so lay aside all unreasonable Divisions and private Animosities, that whensoever it shall please God to put a successful End to *the War abroad*, we may enjoy the blessed Effects of *Peace and Charity*, of *mutual Confidence and Agreement at home*.

*Secondly*, Let us heartily endeavour to promote the Interest of *that Government*, the Support and Establishment whereof is one principal Effect of the Successes for which we publicly return Thanks to God. Let us contribute our utmost, each in our proper Stations, to support a Government so happily establish'd; and to make the executive Part of it as easy and as little burdensome as possible, in the Hands wherein it is lodg'd. *To seek the Peace of the City or Country* wherein we dwell, and in the *Peace thereof* to expect *Peace*, is Mens Duty and Interest even under *bad Governments*: How much more, under the best and most wisely constituted Government in the World,

Jer.xxix.

i.

World, under the easiest and gentlest Administration, under a Government wherein nothing else is design'd but the preserving the publick Welfare and Happiness, the Security and Establishment of the Protestant Religion, the maintaining the Rights and Liberties both of Nations and of private Persons against Tyranny and Oppression : How much more, I say, in this Case, must all such be utterly inexcusable, who, under any Pretences whatever, foment Divisions and Animosities, Jealousies and groundless Suspicions, to weaken the Hands of the Government, and prevent the perfecting and securing upon a lasting Foot the foremention'd great and excellent Ends ! We have been rescu'd by wonderful Deliverances, from the Rod of Arbitrary Power, from the Follies of Enthusiasm, and from the Superstitions of Popery : *Should we again grow weary of our own Happiness, and despise the Liberty wherewith God has bless'd us ; should we again desire to join in Affinity with the People of these Abominations ; would it not be just with God to suffer them still to become Thorns in our Sides, and their Gods to be a Snare unto us, and that he should be angry with us 'till he had consumed us ?* Ezra. ix. 12.

Thirdly,

Serm. *Thirdly*, Let us take great Heed, lest  
 III. by running into lawless and ungovernable  
 ~~~~~ Licentiousness, we abuse and destroy those  
Rights and Liberties, which have long
 been so earnestly and so justly contended
 for; and which the Successes we are now
 returning Thanks for, are the Means of
 securing to us upon a solid Foundation.
 God has bless'd us with great and glori-
 ous Success against our *Foreign Enemies*;
 which we hope he will continue to us,
 till the Liberties of *Europe* be establish'd
 by a firm and lasting Peace. Let us not
 after that, become Enemies to *Ourselves*,
 by a Licentiousness impatient of the most
 necessary Restraints; lest by our own Un-
 thankfulness and *Intestine Confusions*, we
 deprive ourselves of the Benefit of a Bless-
 ing purchas'd with so much Blood and
 Treasure; and provoke God to suffer us
 to destroy ourselves by losing our *Liber-
 ty* wholly, while we affect more of it than
 is just and reasonable, or consistent with
 good Order and Government and the
 publick Safety. For as, on the one Hand,
 the Abuse of Arbitrary Power in *Gover-
 nors*, has generally been the Occasion of
 putting People upon recovering the Li-
 berties they had lost; so on the other
 Hand, Licentiousness or Abuse of Li-
 berty

berty in the People, tends always to such Confusions, as terminate usually in Arbitrary Power again. Serm. III.

Fourthly, and above all, let us take Care to *practise* the Religion we *profess*, and for the Preservation whereof we are so highly concern'd. One of the principal Benefits of all the glorious Successes God has bless'd us with, is the securing the Reform'd Religion amongst us, against the Attempts of Popish Superstition. But what will it profit us, to bear the Name and Profession of a *Reform'd Religion*, if in our Practice and in Reality we have *no Religion at all*? Of what Use will it be to us, to be secur'd from the Vanities and Superstitions of Popery; if on the contrary we run into Atheism, Irreligion and Profaneness?

Christianity itself, our Saviour assures us, is of no Advantage to those who do not obey *the Will of his Father which is in Heaven*; but their Portion will be among *Unbelievers*. In like Manner neither can any particular *Reformation of Religion* from the grossest Corruptions that have crept into it, be of any Benefit to those, whose *Manners* are not *reform'd* together with their Profession.

GOD, who commandeth the Light to ² Cor. iv. shine out of Darkness, grant that the Light ^{4.} 6.

G

of

Serm. of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is

III. the Image of God, may so shine in our
 Hearts, as that we may bring forth Fruit
 worthy of that Light of the Knowledge of
 the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus
 Christ.



A
SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN,

At St. JAMES's Chapel, on
Wednesday the 8th of March,
1709-10. being the Anniver-
sary of Her Majesty's happy
Accession to the Throne.

Publiſh'd by Her MAJESTY's Special Command.

2^d CHRON. xxxi. 21.

*And in every Work that he began in the Ser-
vice of the House of God, and in the Law,
and in the Commandments to seek his God,
he did it with all his Heart, and prospered.*

THERE is so necessary a Con-
nexion between the Happiness of
Governors, and that of the Peo-
ple committed to their Charge ; that as
there lies an indispensable Obligation up-
on

Serm.

IV.

Serm.
IV.

on Princes and all that are in Authority, to govern in the Ways of Piety and Righteousness, in order to the Welfare and Prosperity of the Publick, as well as upon account of their own private Duty to God; so the People have always great Reason to be very thankful to God, when under the Administration of pious and religious Princes, they enjoy both in the natural Course of Things, the unspeakable Advantages of Peace and good Government, and have moreover a particular Title to the extraordinary Blessings of Providence, and to all the Promises God has made in Scripture to the Righteous, of national Prosperity.

God, who is perfect Goodness, and who communicates to all his Creatures such Proportions of Happiness, as is suitable to the original or improved Capacities of their Natures, has so framed and constituted the Nature of Man in this present State, that as *every particular Person*, with regard to the Temper of his own Mind, is in great Measure either happy or miserable within himself, in Proportion as his Passions are more or less subject to the Direction and Government of right Reason; so *Numbers of Men in Societies* likewise, do proportionably either promote or destroy each other's Happiness,

ness, as their Dealings one with another Serm.
are either just and righteous, equitable IV.
and charitable, honourable and publick-
spirited; or, on the contrary, base and
malicious, deceitful and unrighteous, vio-
lent and oppressive. The Happiness
which Mankind would enjoy even here
upon Earth, if all Mens Passions were
kept subject to Reason, and every private
Interest made subservient to the publick;
is greater than can be expressed in Words,
or than can easily be conceived in the I-
magination. And to preserve that Hap-
piness constant and perpetual, among Per-
sons of such a Disposition; there would
be wanting little other Government, but
that of right Reason; and few other *Laws*,
than only the Dictates of Conscience,
which are the Law of the most High.
But this being the State, not of *Earth*,
but of *Heaven*; not of the *present* World,
but of the *new Heaven* and *new Earth*,
wherein is to dwell universal Righteous-
ness; that which in the next Place is most
desirable, and which is the highest De-
gree of Happiness that can in Fact be at-
tained to by Mankind here upon Earth;
is, that the Practice of Righteousness and
true Virtue may be established and incou-
raged by *Human Laws*; that the *Execution*
of those Laws be intrusted in just and wise

Serm. Hands; and that Governors, both Supreme
 IV. and Subordinate, at the same Time that
 they impartially administer Justice to o-
 thers, be themselves Examples of that Vir-
 tue and Goodness, which the Design of
 all good Laws is to promote the Practice
 of. That so, those who *fear not God*, nor
love Righteousness, may yet either through
Shame, or *the Fear of Men*, be in some
 Measure restrained within the Bounds of
 their Duty; and, if they will not, out of
 a Sense of Religion, endeavour to do *Good*
 in the World; yet at least, by the Coercion
 of wise Laws, they may be prevented from
 being able to do much *Mischief* in it.

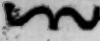
As the *greatest Calamity* that can befall
 Mankind, is to be left in a State of *abso-
 lute Anarchy and Confusion*, to devour each
 other like wild Beasts; in a State, where-
 in Force gives Right to all Manner of Op-
 pression, and Fraud and Violence are prac-
 tised with all Impunity and without Re-
 straint: And the next to this extreme
 Calamity, is *bad Government*; wherein ei-
 ther Laws promote the Mischiefs they
 ought to prevent; or Governors, against
 Law, encourage those very Practices
 which 'tis the whole Intention of their
 Office to restrain; and Princess become
 Terrors to their Neighbours, and Destroy-
 ers of their own Subjects; and the Op-
 pressed

pressed cry, and no Man delivers them ; and Violence sits in the Seat of Judgment, and Extortion and Rapine are establish'd as it were by Law : As such *bad Government*, I say, is the next great Calamity to having *no Government at all* : So, on the contrary, *next* to that Angelical State, that State of *Paradise*, wherein there would be little need of any other Laws or Authority than the Fear of God ; the *next great Blessing* Mankind is capable of, is *good Government* : Government, which truly answers the Design of its Establishment ; which in real Effects, represents the Divine Authority ; which, by the whole Exercise of its Power, promotes the Honour of God in the World, and the publick Welfare and Happiness of Mankind.

Accordingly the principal Instruments which God generally makes use of, either in conveying his greatest temporal Blessings to Mankind, or in inflicting his severest Punishments on any Nation or People, are *good* or *bad Princes*.

'Tis remarkable in the History of the Jewish Nation, that when *they rejected the Lord, that he should not reign over them*, 1 Sam. viii. 7. The Threatning wherewith the Prophet was commanded to endeavour to deter them from their disobedient Purpose, was this, *ver. 9. Pro-*
test

Serm. *test solemnly unto them, and show them the*

IV. *Manner of the King that shall reign over*
 *them,——He will take your Sons, and ap-*

point them for himself, for his Chariots, and to be his Horsemen, and some shall run before his Chariots: And he——will set them to ear his Ground, and to reap his Harvest, and to make his Instruments of War, and Instruments of his Chariots: And he will take your Fields and your Vineyards and Oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his Servants. —— And ye shall cry out in that Day, and the Lord will not hear you.

There have been some so unreasonable, as to interpret this Passage, not as a Threatning of Punishment express'd in the Character of a bad Government, but as a Delegation of that Power which God intended all Governors should have a Right to exercise. But the whole Scope and Connexion of the Words evidently shows the contrary. And the Histories of the Eastern Nations of the World, who have long lived under the Exercise of such absolute arbitrary Dominion, show how inexpressibly great a Calamity such Governments are to Mankind. And the Experience even of a neighbouring Nation alone, which from one of the potentest and most flourishing Kingdoms upon Earth, has

has been reduced even to the extremest degree of Misery ; is a sufficient Evidence of this Truth. Most reasonably therefore, and as a most proper Argument to deter the *Jews* from continuing in their wanton Disposition of rebelling against God's Government, might the Prophet threaten them with being made subject to such a Dominion.

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On the contrary, in those Passages of Scripture, wherein are promised the greatest Temporal Blessings that God ever bestows on any Nation or People, such Promises are frequently and most emphatically express'd under Descriptions of mild and gentle Governments ; of Governments wherein Justice is establish'd by wise Laws, or administer'd by the Will of Righteous Princes. In the lxxii. *Psalms*, the Description of a Prince, the Greatness and Prosperity of whose Government was to be a Type of the Blessedness of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, is this, *He shall judge the People according unto Right, and defend the Poor : — He shall keep the simple Folk by their Right, defend the Children of the Poor, and punish the wrong-Doer : — He shall come down like the Rain into a Fleece of Wool, even as the Drops that water the Earth : In his Time shall the Righteous flourish, yea, and abundance*

Serm. *dance of Peace so long as the Moon endureth :*

IV. ——— *He shall deliver the Poor when he crieth, the Needy also, and him that hath no Helper ; He shall be favourable to the Simple and Needy, and shall preserve the Souls of the Poor. And in the lx. Chapter of Isaiah, the final Restoration of Jerusalem, which perhaps is no other than a Description of the Happiness of the Heavenly State it self ; because a nobler and loftier Figure could not be borrow'd from any Thing to be found on Earth, is express'd by this Similitude : ver. 17. I will make thy Officers Peace, and thine Exactors Righteousness : Violence shall no more be heard in the Land, Wasting nor Destruction within thy Borders ; but thou shalt call thy Walls Salvation, and thy Gates Praise : ——— Thy People also shall be all Righteous.*

Some Proportions of this Blessedness, both by the natural Consequence of Things and by the positive Direction and Interposition of Providence, do even in this present mixt and uncertain State of Things, always attend any Nation ; when Unrighteousness and Debauchery are in any Measure discourag'd by the good Disposition of the People, or by the pious Endeavours of a Wise and Religious Governor. We of this Nation have (thanks be to God) experienc'd

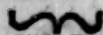
rienc'd good and very great Effects of Serm.
this Kind : And, was it not for our Un-
thankfulness and Unworthy Returns for IV.

God's Blessings, we might have Reason still to expect more. The *Jewish* Nation, whose History was written for our Example, was always blessed with singular Prosperity, when under any pious Prince they lived in remarkable Obedience to the Law of God; and never in a more conspicuous Manner, than in the Days of that excellent Person, of whom it is recorded in the Words of the Text, *that in every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his Heart, and prospered.*

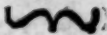
The Words are part of the Character of that pious Prince *Hezekiah* King of *Judah*, of whom the Scripture tells us, that *he did that which was right in the Sight of the Lord, according to all that David his Father had done; and that he kept such a Passover, as had not been kept before, from the Days of David unto that Day; and that he wrought that which was good and right and truth, before the Lord his God; and in every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his*

Serm.

IV.



his Heart : And the Text adds, that he *Prospered* ; and that God blessed him according to his singular Piety. For when *Sennacherib* King of *Assyria* came up against him and against *Jerusalem* with a mighty Host to take it, the *Lord* sent an *Angel*, (2 Chron. xxxii. 21.) which cut off all the mighty Men of Valour, and the Leaders and Captains in the Camp of the King of *Assyria*, so that he returned with Shame of Face to his own Land ; And the *Lord* saved *Hezekiah* and guided him on every Side, and he was magnified in the Sight of all Nations from thenceforth, v. 23. We cannot in this profane and licentious Age, apply to our selves the Zeal wherewith the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* assisted their pious King in his earnest Endeavours to restore among them the Religion and Piety of their Ancestors : Neither, if we could, had we any Warrant to expect such *miraculous* Interpositions of the immediate Hand of God on our Behalf, as his peculiar People then experienc'd. But the Endeavours of that pious Prince whom God has now set over us, to discourage all Immorality, Debauchery and Profaneness, and to promote the Practice of true Religion and Piety in this Nation ; are not inferior to the good Dispositions of any of the pious Kings of *Judah* : Nor
are



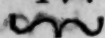
are the Successes wherewith the Providence of God has bless'd us in this Auspicious Reign, against the common Enemies of our Religion and Liberties; much less remarkable, than the Deliverances work'd formerly by direct Miracle for the Children of *Israel*.

In the Words we may observe,

I. That the first and principal Care of good Princes, is to promote the Interest of true *Religion and Virtue among the People* committed to their Charge. *In every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law and in the Commandments, to seek his God; he did it with all his Heart.* Princes are the Vicegerents of God upon Earth; intrusted with Power from him for the Government of Men in Societies, and for the maintenance of Peace and Justice and good Order in the World. This Power is vested in different Hands, and limited with different Regulations, and exercised in different Manners, according to the Laws and Customs of different Nations: But the Power it self is of Divine Original and Appointment, being the Ordinance and Constitution of God; for which Reason Governors, both Supreme and Subordinate, are stiled in Scripture, *Gods*, and the immediate Ministers of God. Having therefore

Serm. fore this Power by Divine Appointment,

IV.

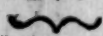


and representing God in the Exercise of it ; 'tis manifest their first and chiefest Care ought to be, to imploy it in advancing his Honour and Glory, from whom they received it. Power without Goodness, and Wisdom not imployed in the promoting of Righteousness, is the justest Object of Mens Fear and Aversion : But when those who are the Ministers of God in the Exercise of Power, imitate him also in that more lovely Perfection of Goodness ; and make it their principal Business to encourage that universal Virtue, the Establishment of which in the World, is in the most acceptable Manner fulfilling the Will of God, and promoting his Honour and Glory ; then do they most eminently verify that Character the Scripture gives of them, *I have said ye are Gods, and ye are all the Children of the most High.* The Instructions upon this Head, given by *David* in his dying Words, are very remarkable. *2 Sam. xxiii. 1. These be the last Words of David : David the Son of Jesse said, and the Man who was raised up on high, the Anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel said, the Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue ; the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me : He that rul-*
eth

eth over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear Sermon.
of God. He must himself rule in the Fear IV.
 of God; and he must make it his chief and
 principal Care, to cause *others* to fear
 him likewise. Accordingly we find the
 principal Part of the Character of all the
 good Kings of *Judah*, whose History is
 related in Scripture; taken from their
 Zeal to promote the Service and Wor-
 ship of God, and the Establishment of
 true Religion in their Kingdom. Many
 of the Methods they used, agreeable to
 the then present State and Circumstances
 of Things, and to the extraordinary Com-
 missions they had; are by no Means in-
 deed to be imitated under the Gospel-State,
 or drawn into Example by the Practice of
 Christian Princes, who have no such spe-
 cial and immediate Warrants from God:
 But in general 'tis still their Duty, by all
 wise and Christian Methods, by all Me-
 thods suitable to the Nature and Design of
 the Gospel, to employ the Power and Au-
 thority God has given them, in promot-
 ing the Interest of the true Religion, in
 encouraging Virtue and discouraging Vice.
 It is still true, that *a wise King scattereth*
the Wicked, and bringeth the Wheel over
them, Prov. xx. 26. 'Tis still true, that
Rulers are not a Terror to good Works,
but to the Evil; that the Magistrate, su-
 preme

Serm.


IV.



preme or subordinate, beareth not the Sword in vain ; for he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doeth Evil. Rom. xiii. 4. that he is sent of God for the Punishment of evil doers, and for the Praise of them that do well, 1 Pet. ii. 14.

The only Caution here necessary to be us'd, is, that true Religion, in the promoting whereof the principal Care of good Princes is to be employed, be always understood to consist ; not in Matters of Notion, Speculation, and Dispute ; not in Questions of Controversy, and uncertain Opinions ; not in Matters of mere Humane and Temporary Authority ; but in Obedience to the plain Precepts of the Gospel of Christ ; in the great and Fundamental Duties of Piety towards God, Righteousness towards Men, and Temperance in the Government of our selves ; on the Practice of which, depends the Happiness of this Life, and of that which is to come : And that the Things to be principally discouraged by them, are Profaneness and Impiety, Unrighteousness and Iniquity, Debauchery and all Immorality.

Now as the *Nature and Derivation* of their Authority it self, so likewise the *End and Design* of all Government, obliges good

good Princes to make the promoting of Serm.
 Religion and Virtue among the People, IV.
 their principal and greatest Care. For the 
 ultimate End and Design of all Govern-
 ment, is the Peace and Safety, the Wel-
 fare and Prosperity of the Publick, of the
 Society or Community united under such
 a Form of Government. Now 'tis mani-
 fest that nothing promotes this great End,
 so much as the Practice of Religion and
 true Virtue. For Virtue and a true Sense
 of Religion, obliges every Subject, every
 Member of the Society, in whom it is
 found : it obliges him *beforehand*, by a
 much stronger and securer Tie, to do all
 the same Things *freely and willingly, hear-*
tily and sincerely, in publick and in private ;
 which the best and wisest Laws can
 but compel those who want such a Sense
 of Religion, to do *unwillingly, slightly,*
and superficially, in publick Appearance
only, and in the Sight of Men. Religion
 therefore and true Virtue, if they pre-
 vailed in the World, would obtain the
 same End *fully and effectually*, which
 the best and wisest Laws can do but *in*
Part: And Laws are made only to supply,
 in the best Manner they can, the Want
 of true Religion and Virtue among Men.
The Law is not made for a Righteous
Man, but for the Lawless and Disobedi-
H
ent,

Serm. *ent, for the Ungodly and for Sinners, for the*
 IV. *Unholy and the Profane. 1 Tim. i. 9.*

For the same Reasons therefore, that 'tis very necessary for the Establishment of good Government in the World, that Men should be perpetually under the Restraint of wise and wholesome *Laws*; for the same Reasons 'tis much more desirable, (and ought to be the great Aim and Design, the main and constant Endeavour of those in Power and Authority,) that *Religion and true Virtue* should universally prevail; the want of which only it is, that introduces the Necessity of any coercive *Laws* or Penalties at all.

The *Means* by which good Princes are to promote the Practice of true Religion in the World, is not (as was before observed,) by putting Difficulties upon such as are weak or erroneous, in Matters of Speculation and Dispute, or in the Externals of Religion; but by securing the Foundation of Virtue and good Manners, upon which the Happiness of a Nation does most immediately depend; by maintaining the Honour of God, and keeping up a due Sense and Acknowledgment of his Providence, in the Minds of Men; by preserving Faithfulness and Truth, Integrity and Uncorruptness in the transacting and managing of all publick and private Affairs;

Affairs ; and by effectually discouraging all Immorality and Debauchery, which enfeeble the Spirits, and destroy the Power and Honour of a Nation.

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This is principally done by good *Example*, and by countenancing such as are desirous to follow it. For as the Sun diffuses Heat and Vigor, together with its Rays of Light, thro' the spacious Universe ; and insensibly promotes in all Things, by its powerful Influence, both Life and Growth, Motion and Action ; so the Example of a pious Prince, gives far greater Countenance to Religion, than the strictest Laws ; encourages well-disposed Persons, and gives Life and Spirit to all pious Designs ; makes Vice and Immorality ashamed to show its Head ; or at least gives a Check to the more open Profaneness, of such as would publicly despise and throw Contempt upon Religion : Whereas, on the contrary, when the supreme Authority of a Nation, when the *Light of the World*, is it self *Darkness* ; how great must that *Darkness* be ; When the *Head is sick*, and the *whole Heart faint*, what Health and Soundness can the whole Body enjoy ?

Further : The *next* Means, by which good Princes may promote the Interest of Religion, and the Practice of Virtue in the World ; next to the Incou-

Serm. rage ment afforded by their own good

IV.

Example; is by taking all fit Care, that Men be not corrupted in their first Principles by Ignorance and gross Neglect, by Carelesness and want of due Instruction. 'Tis recorded of *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*, as a most remarkable Part of his good Character, *That he sent to his Princes, and appointed Levites and Priests to teach in the Cities of Judah, and they had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the Cities of Judah, and taught the People.*

2 Chr. xviii. 7. And in this particular, as her present Majesty has exceeded the Piety even of the best and most religious Princes among her Predecessors, by considerably augmenting out of her own Revenue the Maintenance of those who by divine Appointment are set apart to the Office of teaching and instructing Men in Matters of Religion; so, that charitable Disposition which seems daily to increase and spread in the Nation, of educating and instructing poor Children in the Principles of Religion, and in the Methods of Industry and honest Labour, it may reasonably be hoped will contribute in due Time to the Accomplishment of that Prophecy, that *the Earth shall be full of the*

the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Seas. Sermon.
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2. 'Tis observed in the Text, that the *Effect* of Princes making it their chief Care to promote the Interest of true Religion and Virtue ; is, *the Prosperity of themselves and their People. In every Work that he began, in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments, to seek his God ; he did it with all his Heart, and Prosper'd.* In the parallel Place, 2 Kings xviii. 7. The Word *Prospered* is thus more largely expressed ; *the Lord was with him, and he Prospered, whithersoever he went forth.* We find in the Histories both of ancient and modern Times, that it has *sometimes* indeed happened otherwise ; and that good and pious Princes have, for the Sins and Iniquities of their People, or for other secret and wise Reasons of Providence, been very unsuccessful in their Affairs, and fallen under great Calamities. But generally speaking, and in the usual Course of Providence, good and religious Princes have been blessed with Success, and great Prosperity. And of this, there are two obvious Reasons. *First*, The natural Tendency of the Thing it self. When Princes govern in the Fear of God, according to Law and Equity, being Mini-

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sters of God to the People for good, and having no other Interest but the Welfare of the Publick; *Mercy and Truth* will preserve their Persons, and their Thrones will be upholden by *Mercy*. Prov. xx. 28. When *Kings* become *nursing Fathers*, and *Queens nursing Mothers* to the Church of God; and the Example of their Virtue and Piety, renders them as conspicuous as their high Station: The Hearts of the Subjects will naturally be filled with Love and Affection, with Esteem and Veneration for them, as well as with a Sense of Duty towards them; and the Authority they are vested with, will be only such a paternal Care, in the Exercise of which they will justly be look'd upon and honoured as *Benefactors*. This is very elegantly express'd by *David* in the Place before-cited: where, after those Words of Instruction, *He that ruleth over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of God*, he immediately adds, *And he shall be as the Light of the Morning, when the Sun arises, even a Morning without Clouds; as the tender Grass springing out of the Earth, by clear shining after Rain.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. When, in Consequence of this the People obeys, not only for Fear, but also for Conscience-sake; and not for Conscience-sake only, but also out of
Love

Love and Choice, in a Sense of their own Happiness: When they become unanimous in their Counsels and Designs; and every one, free from all Fear of any Incroachment upon their just Rights, their Liberties and Properties, discharges his Duty in his proper Station with Fidelity and Cheerfulness: This, in the Nature of Things, will establish a Government with Firmness and Security at Home, and spread Dread and Terror, upon his *Enemies abroad*. *Righteousness*, in the natural Tendency of the thing it self, *will exalt a Nation*; as, on the contrary, *Sin* will be a *Reproach to any People*. But *Secondly*, the Providence of God, does moreover in a peculiar manner most frequently concern it self, in blessing and prospering the Designs of pious Princes: *The King that faithfully judges the Poor, his Throne shall be established for ever*, Prov. xxix. 14. Notwithstanding the greatest natural Security from second Causes, yet, *except the Lord keep the City, the Watch-man, Soldier may awake in vain*. Here therefore is the Establishment of the Throne of the Righteous; that it is under the sure protection of him, whose *Kingdom ruleth over all*. We read, 2 Chron. xvii. 10. (where is set down the good Character fore-cited of *Jehoshaphat King of Judah*; that

Serm. the Lord was with him, and established the
 IV. Kingdom in his Hand; and the Fear of
 the Lord fell upon all the Kingdoms of the
 Lands that were round about Judah, so
 that they made no War against Jehoshaphat. And we of this Nation enjoy at
 this Day the happy Effects of the Blessings of Providence upon the pious Princess he has set over us; in giving her such signal Successes against the common Enemy, as we may reasonably hope will soon terminate in a safe, honourable, and lasting Peace.

3. It remains in the *Third* and last Place, by Way of Application, to consider briefly what the *Duty* of Subjects is, who have the Happiness of living under such Governors, as follow the Example, and answer the Character given of good King *Hezekiah* in the Text.

And 1st. 'Tis their Duty to return Thanks to God, for the Benefits they enjoy under the happy Influence of a pious Example and a wise Administration. 'Tis *St. Paul's* Exhortation, not only to pray, but also to give Thanks, for Kings, and for all that are in Authority; as being those under whose Protection we lead a quiet and peaceable Life, and by whose Care we are encouraged to live in all Godliness and Honesty. To be thankful to
 God,

God, whose Instruments and Vicegerents pious Governors are; (and who is therefore *in this respect* in a more especial Manner the principal and supreme Cause of the Blessings conveyed to Us through their Hands;) is *rendring unto God the Things that are God's*, at the same Time that we make just Acknowledgment to *Cæsar* of what is due to *Cæsar*.

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And as we must not be unthankful to God, for Blessings received; so we must take Care, not to express our Joy and Gratitude in an improper Manner. We must declare our Thankfulness, not by unseemly Mirth, not in Rioting and Debauchery; but by the sincere Practice of that Religion, the Preservation of which is the Conclusion of all our Prayers; and by Acts of steddy Affection to that Government, the Support of which is the Foundation of all our Hopes.

2dly. 'Tis the Duty of Subjects under pious Governors, not only to acknowledge, that, *seeing by Them they enjoy great Quietness, and that very worthy Deeds are done unto the Nation by Their Providence*, therefore they *accept it all ways and in all Places with all Thankfulness*; but they must show forth their real Gratitude, by Imitation of the Example set them from the Throne, and by a strict

Acts xxiv.

Serm.

IV.

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strict Observation of the Laws against Profaneness, Debauchery and Immorality, so often recommended to them from thence, as the only certain Means of securing the Continuance of the Favour and Blessing of God, both upon them and their Prince. They must show forth their Gratitude by uniting all Hearts and Hands to promote, each in their proper Station, with all Diligence and Faithfulness, the Safety and Honour of the Government; by laying aside all private Animosities and Contentions among themselves; and by putting a stop (as much as in them lies) to all groundless Jealousies and unreasonable Suspicions, which tend to abate Mens Affection towards their Governors, and to bring Difficulties upon the Administration of publick Affairs.

3dly. 'Tis the Duty of Subjects under all, and much more under pious and religious Governors, to offer up constantly for them, according to the Exhortation of the Apostle, *Supplications, Prayers and Intercessions*: That God would be pleased to give them Understanding and Knowledge, Strength and Ability, to go in and out before a great People; that he would enable them to bear the great Weight and Burden of publick Business, assist them to undergo the manifold Difficulties



culties arising from the Uncertainties of all humane Affairs, and bless them in all their just Undertakings, with Prosperity and Success. God has hitherto blessed her present Majesty with unparallell'd Success, against the common Enemy of our Religion and Liberties: 'Tis our Duty to pray for a Continuation of the same Success, till the War abroad shall be brought to its desired Conclusion; and that, after that, we may be made a happy People at Home, by Peace and Unity and mutual Confidence among our selves; by a firm Establishment of the wise Constitution of our Government, for a *Succession* of many Generations; by a sincere Reformation of Manners among all Sorts and Degrees of Men; and an universal hearty Concern for the great and weightier Matters of Religion, more than for Things of Controversy and uncertain Dispute: That Humility, Love and Peaceableness, Righteousness and Equity, Diligence, Faithfulness and Truth, may possess the Hearts of Men of all Ranks and Conditions among us: That God would be pleased to inspire her Majesty with a discerning Heart, a wise and understanding Spirit; to bless her with Able Counsellors, with Righteous and Just Officers in all Places of Trust; with a Dutiful

Serm. tiful and obedient People: That *the Queen*
 IV. may rejoice in thy strength, O Lord, and
 be exceeding glad of thy Salvation: That
 thou mayest give her her Hearts Desire, and
 not deny her the Request of her Lips: That
 thou mayest prevent her with the Blessings
 of Goodness, and make her Honour great in
 thy Salvation, and crown her with Glory
 and great Worship: That thou mayest give
 her a long Life here, and a longer and hap-
 pier hereafter, even for ever and ever.



A
SERMON

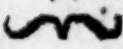
Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St. James's Westminster,
On Tuesday, November 7, 1710.

Being the Day of Thanksgiving
for the Successes of the foregoing Campaign.

PSAL. cxlv. 2.

*Every Day will I bless thee, and I will praise
thy Name for ever and ever.*

THE particular Occasion, upon Sermon.
which this Psalm was composed, V.
is not known: But in general, 
that it was occasioned by some extraordinary Blessing, such as Success and Victory
over powerful Enemies, or some other
the like remarkable Interposition of Providence; is evident from the whole Course
of the Psalm. For the Author of it, beginning with high Expressions of Joy and
Thankfulness, (v. 1.) *I will extol thee, O
God,*

Serm. God, my King, and will bless thy Name
 V. *for ever and ever ; every Day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy Name for ever and ever ;* proceeds in the 4th Verse to declare, that the Ground of this his Joy and Thankfulness, was some mighty Act ; some publick and eminent Interposition of Providence in his Behalf : One Generation, says he, shall praise thy Works to another, and shall declare thy mighty Acts ; I will speak of the glorious Honour of thy Majesty, and of thy wondrous Works : and Men shall speak of the Might of thy terrible Acts, and I will declare thy Greatness : And ver. 11. They shall speak of the Glory of thy Kingdom. and talk of thy Power ; to make known to the Sons of Men his mighty Acts, and the glorious Majesty of his Kingdom, After which he goes on, from the Consideration of past Mercies, to infer the reasonableness of Mens depending upon the same Providence for the Continuance of his Protection in Time to come ; if by a religious Behaviour they approve themselves worthy of his Care and Favour. Ver. 18, The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all them that call upon him faithfully : he will fulfil the Desire of them that fear him, he also will bear their Cry and will save them : The
 Lord

on the THANKSGIVING-DAY.

III

Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the Wicked will he destroy. And then he concludes in the last Verse, with Expressions of Joy and Thanksgiving, as he began in the first; *My Mouth shall speak the Praise of the Lord, and let all Flesh bless his holy Name for ever and ever.*

Serm.

V.



The Application of this Discourse of the Psalmist, to our present Occasion, is very obvious. God has done for us, Things no less wonderful and remarkable, than for the *Jews* of old; and it becomes us to praise him after the same Pattern, which the inspired Psalmist drew up for *their* Use. It becomes *Us every Day* to give Thanks unto him, and to praise his Name for ever and ever. It concerns us to take heed that we behave our selves worthily, upon the Mercies we have receiv'd; that we be found in the Number of those that love him, and of those that call upon him in Faithfulness and Truth. And when *this* is our Case; then it will become us with humble Confidence, to depend upon his Promise for further Protection, that he who is *righteous in all his Ways*, and *holy in all his Works*; will continue to be nigh unto us; to preserve and support us; and be always ready

to

Serm. to hear and fulfil the Desire of them that
 V. *fear and obey him.*

The Words of the Text consist of two Parts.

1st. A Declaration of that *Disposition of Mind*, which ought to be found in such Persons, as have received great Mercies from God; And,

2^{dly}. An Account of the *outward Effects* of that pious Disposition, in Acts of publick Praise and Thanksgiving to God.

The former is a grateful and due *Sense* of God's Goodness. The latter, is the *Fruit and Consequence* of that just Sense of Things upon the Mind; showing forth it self in external Acts of Worship, and in calling upon others to join with us in *publishing* the Praises of him, whose Power is so conspicuous in all great Events, and whose *tender Mercies are over all his Works*.

But there is no need to insist separately upon each Part of this Distinction; because, though the Things themselves are really distinct, yet they must always be supposed to *accompany* each other. For where the Mind is *inwardly* and deeply possessed with a just Sense of the Goodness of God, the *external Behaviour* cannot but of Necessity be answerable to the *inward*

ward Sense and Disposition of the Mind : Sermon.
 And where the *outward Actions* are full of proper Expressions of Gratitude, and professed Acknowledgments of the Divine Goodness; though God *only* can know the Heart, yet Men must always charitably *suppose*, that the *inward Sense* and Disposition of the Mind, is agreeable to the Character of the *outward Action*. There is no need therefore for Us to distinguish, between *Thankfulness* as 'tis a Habit and Temper of the Mind, or as 'tis an *Expression* of that Temper in our *Behaviour and Actions*. For these things ought always to go together, as in sincere Persons they really do; And in the unsincere, where they do not, yet to the Eye of the World, which is all *We* can judge of, they must of Necessity appear to do so. *We* cannot, therefore, but treat of these things as Synonymous; and, when we exhort Men to the Duty of Thankfulness, must always understand those *external Actions*, which are the *proper Expressions*, and ought always to be the *real Significations*, of a *grateful Mind*. Wherefore, without distinguishing between these two Branches, we may look upon the Text as one single Proposition; and take the latter Part, as only an Explication of the former. *Every Day will I bless thee*; or, as it is in the

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the

Serm. the old Translation, *Every Day will I give*
 V. *Thanks unto thee ; and praise thy Name for*
ever and ever.

That which is more particularly remarkable in the Words ; is the Expression, *Every Day*. As if *every Day* of our Lives, were to be a Day of Thanksgiving ; and our Expressions of Gratitude, as uninterrupted as our Breath. The Meaning is ; that, as we are directed by the Apostle to *Pray without ceasing* ; and, by our Lord to petition our heavenly Father constantly for the Continuance of our *daily Food*, in Acknowledgment of our perpetual Dependence upon Providence, for the very Breath we draw, and for the Bread we daily eat : So we ought to be no less constantly and habitually thankful to God for the Benefits *we have received*, than we are importunate in our Petitions to him for the Things *we want*. In every Thing giving Thanks, as St. Paul expresses it, 1 *Thes.* v. 18. and *Eph.* v. 20. *Giving Thanks always for all Things unto God, even the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

There are some Things, which we enjoy in common with *all the Creatures* of God ; Life and Breath, and the common Protection and Preservation of Providence. And for these we are to join in that great
 and

and universal Choir, which St. *John* in *Serm.*
his Vision so elegantly describes, *Rev. v.*

V.

13. and iv. 11. *Every Creature which is in Heaven and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the Sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying;—Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory and Honour and Power; for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.* There are other Gifts, peculiar to Men; Understanding and Knowledge, Reason and the Use of Speech, a Capacity of searching out and meditating upon the Works of God. And for these Faculties, we are to express our Gratitude, by imploying them in his Service; by promoting his Glory, and by so behaving our selves in the Exercise of our Dominion over the inferior Creation, that all the *Works* of God, over which he has made *Man* the Lord, may with our Tongues praise him, and magnify him for ever.

There are other Blessings peculiar to particular *Nations*: And for these we are to glorify God, by a particular thankful Acknowledgment, and by the proper Use of such respective Blessings.

If the Providence of God has planted us in a fruitful Country, and his Goodness successively crowns our Years with a

Serm.
V.

perpetual *Increase*; we are then to express our Thankfulness by Temperance and Sobriety, by Charity and Works of Mercy to the Poor, by taking great Care to prevent Luxury and Debauchery, Pride and Vanity, Sloth and Forgetfulness of God; which are the Vices too apt to spring up out of Prosperity and Plenty. *When thou hast eaten, and art full, said Moses in his last and wise Exhortation to the Israelites: then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good Land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his Commandments, and his Judgments and his Statutes, which I command thee this Day; lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly Houses, and dwelt therein; ——— and thy Silver and thy Gold, ——— and all that thou hast, is multiplied; then thine Heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, &c. Deut. viii. 10.*

If God has indued us with *Learning* and *Wisdom*, with Understanding and Knowledge, above other Nations of our Fellow-Creatures; whom we are too apt to despise under the Name of *Barbarians*; tyrannizing over their Weakness, and insulting over their Ignorance; nor considering who it is that has taught any of

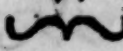
us more than the Beasts of the Field, and made us wiser than the Fowls of Heaven : Serm. V.

The proper Way wherein our Gratitude should shew forth it self for *these* Things, is in applying Learning to the Advantage of Religion, and to the promoting of the Glory of God in the World ; by increasing *real Knowledge*, and not perplexing it with *imaginary Subtilties* ; by discovering *Truth*, and not colouring over *Errors* ; by propagating what is *certain*, and not contending for *disputable Opinions*. Job. xxxv. 11.

If God has vouchsafed us *the glorious Light of the Gospel*, and the *Knowledge of his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ* ; while many other Nations lie yet in the Darkness of Heathenism, and have not the Knowledge of the Laws of God : The best and most acceptable Method of returning our Thanks for so inestimable a Blessing ; is, that we endeavour to propagate the Christian Knowledge with Simplicity to *Others* ; and that we take Care above all Things to obey the Truth *ourselves*, in the Love and in the Purity thereof.

If God has not only placed us under the Light of the Gospel, but blessed us also yet further with greater *Purity of Religion*, by a *Reformation* from the *gross*

Serm. *sest* Errors and Idolatrous Superstitions,

V.  wherewith even the Christian World it-
self had been almost universally overspread,

Rev. xvii. thro' the Corruption of that *Mother* of
5, 14. vii. *Harlots and Abominations of the Earth,*
18, 24.

*which hath made all Nations to drink of
the Wine of her Fornication, and in whom
is found the Blood of the Prophets and
Saints, and of all that are slain upon the
Earth: If God, I say, has blessed us
with a Reformation from these grossest
of Corruptions; the most suitable Return
of Thankfulness for such an Advantage,
is to pursue the Spirit and Design of that
Reformation; and to take great Care, that
we be not deluded insensibly to fall back*

Ezra ix.

14.

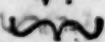
*again, and join in Affinity with the People
of these Abominations; but that we sted-
fastly take more and more heed, with-
out Regard to any Human Authority what-
soever, and without calling any Man Fa-*

Mat. xxiii.

9.

*ther or Master upon Earth, to adhere to
the divine Authority of the Scriptures on-
ly, as the adequate Rule of Faith and
Manners; which is the sole Foundation
of the Protestant Religion, and the only
effectual Means of preventing all Diffe-
rences among those who sincerely desire
to understand and practise the Truth.*

If God has preserved unto us our *law-
ful Liberties and Properties*, under a mild
and

and well-constituted Government; when Sermon.
almost all other Nations upon Earth, are V.
subject to arbitrary and illegal Dominion; 
which is that Form of Government, where-
with God threatned to punish the *Israe-*
lites for their Rebellion against him, when
he declared unto them by the Prophet
Samuel the *Manner of the King that* 1 Sam. viii.
should reign over them: Our Thankful-9.
ness for the Continuance of such a Blessing,
can by no other Way be so properly ex-
pressed, as by making it our chief Care to
use that Liberty which we so justly boast
of, and which we have thought worth
the defending almost with infinite Blood
and Treasure, so as not to abuse it to
Licentiousness and Wantonness: To use
our Liberty so, as not to run into the
contrary Extreme of Lawlessness and Con-
fusion; To use it so, as not to break
through the Obligations of regular Go-
vernment and legal Restraints.

Lastly, If God has crowned all our o-
ther Blessings, with that which is the Se-
curity and Preservation of them all; a
constant Series of unparallell'd *Successes*,
and *Victories* beyond Example great and
complete, against the potentest Enemy
that ever yet attempted to enslave the
World; *What shall we render unto the*
Lord for these his Benefits, and what Re-

Serm. turns shall we make him for such a Blessing as this? The Answer to this Question, is of great Importance; and the serious Consideration of it, is that without which our religious Assemblies would be but mere Hypocrisy, and our Prayers no better than a mocking of God.

1st. Therefore, if we will make worthy Returns to God, for these his Benefits, in giving us such Victories and Success, we must in the first Place be careful to make ourselves truly sensible, from *what Hand* these Blessings do really come. We must be fully persuaded, that 'tis *GOD* that gives Victory in the Day of Battle, and that Success is owing to the Protection of the Almighty; that 'tis he that *breaketh the Bow, and knappeth the Spear in sunder, and burneth the Chariots in the Fire*. That which is apt to deceive Men in this Matter, is their observing Things to depend upon *Second Causes*, and to be brought about by the Operation of *Natural Agents*. But what are *Second Causes*, and what are *Natural Agents*, but mere *Instruments* in the Hand of him who *ruleth over all*? All other Things, excepting *Men* only who are free Agents, have no Pretence to be esteemed *Causes* in any Sense at all; but are meerly as *Instruments* in the Hand of the Workman. And
by

by these Things, the Counsels and Designs even of *Men* themselves, of the wisest Men, and of the strongest Forces, are perpetually over-ruled to quite different Events, than they intended or could possibly foresee. So that the Issues of all great Actions, and the main Turns of all worldly Affairs, depend entirely upon such Accidents, as are wholly in the Hand of God to direct. Which Accidents, tho' they be indeed what we vulgarly call *Natural Causes*, yet this is really nothing else but an Impropriety of Speech; to call that a *Cause*, which, being unintelligent, is in Truth nothing more than an *Instrument* in the Hand of him who is truly the efficient Cause. And this is evidently the Case, in all Unintelligent Natural Agents. Whatever they seem to effect, is not in reality done by *them*, but by the *Providence of God*. That the Sun runs its Course *every Day*, is no less strictly and properly the Hand of God, than that it stood still *one Day*: Nor is there any other Ground, why the *one* is by all Men readily ascribed to God, and the *other* they vulgarly fancy is done naturally without him; but only this one foolish Reason, that what God does *once*, they see and acknowledge is done by him; but what he does always, they therefore think 'tis not

he

Serm.

V.

Serm. *he* does it *at all*. The Scripture, (and

V. Reason also,) teaches us more justly, to
 w acknowledge God in all our Ways; and to
 be sensible who it is, that, being the Au-
 thor and Director of Nature, and of all
 those Accidents which we can neither
 foresee nor prevent, does thereby dispose
 and order, as he pleases, the Events of
 all humane Affairs. *There are many De-*
vices in Man's Heart; but the Counsel of the
Lord, that shall stand, Prov. xix. 21.

2dly. We must not only in a meer
Speculative Manner, be convinced that
 'tis the Hand of God which bringeth a-
 bout all great Events, and crowns us with
 Victory and Success; but we must so con-
 sider it and meditate upon it in a *Pratti-*
cal Manner, as to be truly thankful to
 him for the Advantages we reap thereby.
 The Jews in *Moses's* Time knew very well
 who it was, that made them ride on the
 high Places of the Earth, and——to suck
 Honey out of the Rock; and Oyl out of
 the flinty Rock; who it was, that led them
 in the Wilderness like Sheep, and kept
 them as the Apple of his Eye; that suffer-
 ed no Man to do them wrong, but reprov-
 ed even Kings for their Sake. Yet even
 of these very Persons, who knew all these
 Things so perfectly, and had seen them
 with their own Eyes; did that holy Man
 complain,

complain, *Deut. xxxii. 15.* that *Jesbu-* Sermon.
run waxed fat and kicked; that he for- V.
sook the God which made him, and lightly
esteemed the Rock of his Salvation. King
Hezekiah, knew very well who it was
that gave him a Sign, and recover'd him
when he was sick unto Death, and deliver'd
him out of the Hand of the King of Ba-
bylon by a Miracle: Yet even of him, the
Scripture complains, that he rendered not
again, according to the Benefit done unto ^{2 Chron.}
him; for his Heart was lifted up; there- ^{xxxii. 25.}
fore there was Wrath upon him, and upon
Judah and Jerusalem. Even so we also,
 how well soever we apprehend in a *Me-*
taphysical and Speculative Manner, that
 God is the Disposer of the Events of all
 human Affairs; yet what are we the bet-
 ter, if it does not affect us *Morally,* in fil-
 ling our Hearts with *Gratitude,* and our
 Mouths with *Praises,* and our *Lives* with
 Acts of *Obedience* to him, after all the
 great Things that he has done for us?
 This is the only Return, that frail and de-
 pendent Creatures are capable of making,
 to the supreme Lord and Governour of
 all Things. *For our Goodness extendeth not* ^{Job xxxii. 2.}
to him; neither can Man be profitable un-
to God, as he that is wise, may be profi-
table unto himself. But *Thankful* and *O-*
bedient to him, we can be; and most in-
excusable and base is our Ingratitude, if
 his

Serm.

V.

W

his Mercies do not so affect us. Yet most prone is our corrupt Nature, to become thus forgetful of our supreme Benefactor : And the very *Frequency* of great and unexpected Blessings, is itself, to careless and profane Persons, an Occasion of neglecting those Things as common, which, if they had more rarely happened, would have been more carefully observed. In the Course of this great and bloody War, almost *every Campaign* has offered as much Matter of Thanksgiving, as at other times the whole Series even of a successful War has been used to furnish. And for this very Reason, because we have been obliged to return Thanks *so often*, unthinking and careless Persons have little or no Disposition to be truly thankful and devout *at all*. The proper Remedy against this Evil, is to consider seriously and distinctly, what it is that we have hitherto been delivered from, by those Successes, for which we have so often and with so much Reason been commanded to return publick Thanks. The War, wherein we are now engaged, seems to be the last Struggle for the *two* Things, which alone are valuable in human Life ; *Liberty*, and *Religion* : In Opposition to *arbitrary Power*, which destroys all Property ; and in Opposition to *humane Authority and Infallibility*

bility sitting in the Seat of God, which is totally inconsistent with all true Religion. Had it pleased God to permit our Enemies to have been as successful against Us, as we have hitherto been victorious over them; we had long since been Slaves, deprived of all legal Right to our temporal Possessions; and, for our Religion, had been worshipping Stocks and Stones, and Souls of Men departed, instead of Him that made the Heavens and the Earth and the Sea, and all Things that are therein. Or, had Providence permitted us to have been deluded, with the Pretences of a false and deceitful Peace, the Effects of such an ill-grounded and insecure Agreement, might possibly have been much more fatal, than the Continuance even of the bloodiest and most expensive War. And the growing Mischiefs of one disadvantageous Treaty, might have been more difficult to retrieve than the transient Miseries even of many unprosperous and unsuccessful Campaigns. For we have to deal with an Enemy, with whom no Peace is to be had longer, than we have Power to enforce it; an Enemy, whose Character is exactly given by the Prophet Daniel, *cb. viii. v. 23.* *A King of fierce Countenance,——who shall destroy wonderfully; ——and through his Policy also*

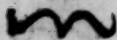
Serm.

V.

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Rev. xiv. 7.

Serm. *also he shall cause Craft to prosper, ——— and*

V. *he shall magnify himself in his Heart; and by*
 *Peace shall be destroy many.*

3dly. That our Thanksgiving may become truly acceptable; it must be accompanied with such Circumstances, and followed with such Behaviour, as may show the *Words* of our *Mouths* to be real Expressions of the *Thoughts* of our *Hearts*, and that our Praises proceed not out of feigned Lips. Our Joy must express it self, not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Frenzy and Debauchery; but in Praises and Thanksgivings accompanied with Sobriety and Purity, with Modesty and Humility; such as becomes those who mean to honour God with Piety and sincere Devotion in the Practice of that Religion, the Preservation of which from being over-run with the Tyranny and Superstition of Popery, is one of the principal Grounds of our rejoicing for that Success wherewith God has hitherto blessed us. For it becomes us *Christians* to rejoice, not in *Ravage* and *Bloodshed*, not in the *Misery* and *Destruction* even of our *Enemies* themselves: It becomes us to rejoice, not upon the Increase of our *Power* for *Dominion's* sake; not upon the enlarging our *Territories*, and aggrandizing the *Honour* of our *Arms*; but in being enabled

abled to rescue the oppress'd *Liberties* of *Serm.*
Nations; to restore the common *Rights* *V.*
of human Nature; and to secure that *Free-*
dom of Religion, in the denying of which
consists the very *Essence* of *Antichristian*
Iniquity. *All Nations*, after their *Fashi-*
on, return their *Thanks* to the *Almighty*,
for *Victory* and *Success* over their *Ene-*
mies; and the greatest *Tyrants* and *Op-*
pressors of *Mankind*, pretend to praise
God, whenever their *Arms*, by the *Per-*
mission of *Providence*, and for the *Punish-*
ment of the *World*, prevail over the *Weak-*
ness of their neighbouring *Nations*: But
these their *Thanksgivings* are *Profaneness*;
and to presume to offer *Praises* to God,
for the *Increase* of *Power* for *Power's*
fake, and for the setting up *arbitrary* and
tyrannical Dominion, is no better than
affronting of God, and making a *Mockery*
of *Religion*. *Christians* are to desire, and
to rejoice at the obtaining such *Victories*
only, as tend to establish the *Rights* and
Properties of *Mankind*, and the common
Liberties of *Nations*: And our *Joy* must
express it self in such a *Manner*, and be
attended with such consequent *Behaviour*
as is becoming the *Purity* of the *Gospel*
of *Christ*. For, as the *Wisdom* which is
from above, so the *Joy* also of those who
are possess'd of that *Wisdom*, is, *first pure,*
then

Serm. *then peaceable, gentle and easy to be in-*
 V. *treated, full of Mercy and good Fruits.*

James iii.
 17.

It becomes us to rejoice for Success in War for no other Reason, but because 'tis the necessary and only Means of arriving at a safe and secure Peace. With which Blessing when it shall please God to complete and crown all our past Successes; then will it highly behove us to approve our selves indeed the *Children of Peace*, by laying aside all those unchristian *Divisions and Animosities* among our selves, which are kept up by mutual Accusations, full (as we may reasonably hope) of more *Uncharitableness* than *Truth*. The Means of causing all which to be forgotten, is first to *unite* heartily in pursuing the Things wherein we all agree; and then to wait with *Charity* in those wherein we differ, 'till even in *these* also God shall reveal the *Truth* unto us. Let us consider, that *Force* and *Violence*, without Regard to Right and Equity, are the Means by which our *Adversaries* propagate their *Power*, and (as they are pleas'd to call it) their *Religion* also: For which Reason principally, their *Power* is a *publick Enemy* to Mankind, and their *Religion* properly *Antichristian*. But we profess to make *War*, not for the sake of *Conquest*, but only to obtain to our selves a secure
 Peace.

Peace. And our Religion teaches us, as Serm. V. to desire the Publick, so to maintain (as far as possible) private Peace also among our selves; by mutual Love, Charity and Good-will; as becomes those who profess the Gospel of Peace.

Let us therefore endeavour to understand rightly, the full Nature and Design of the Religion we profess. Which consists mainly in these two Things. 1st, That the Scripture (as I before observ'd) is the only Rule of our Faith. Which, if duly attended to, would speedily put an End to all Differences and Contentions, among those who consider what they mean when they make that Profession. And 2dly, That the Commandments of God are infinitely of more Importance, than any speculative Notions or Opinions of Men. Which Thing, if seriously consider'd, would as effectually regulate our Practice in the Conduct of Life, as the adhering stedfastly to the only true Rule of Faith, would at once cut off all Disputes in the Matter of our Belief. Our Lusts and Follies, our Debauchery and Profaneness, our unreasonable and unchristian Uncharitableness and Divisions among our selves; are worse and more dangerous Enemies, than those we fight with abroad. And unless we speedily reform these Abuses,

K and

Serm. and cease to provoke God by the continued Corruption of our Manners; the same Divine Providence, which has hitherto wonderfully fought for us against the potentest Monarch that ever yet aim'd at the Empire of the World; can as easily, if he pleases, turn back our Successes speedily to our entire Destruction; and in a Moment bring upon us, after all our Victories, the very same Event as would have been the Effect of a continually unsuccessful War; at the time when we are just flattering our selves with the Hopes of being put into secure Possession, of the Blessings of a safe and lasting *Peace*.



The Government of Passion.

A
SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN,

AT

St. JAMES'S CHAPEL,
on Sunday the 7th of January,
1710-11.

Publis'd by Her MAJESTY's Special Command.

EPHES. iv. 26.

Be ye Angry, and Sin not.

SINCE in the ordinary Conduct of Serm.
human Life, and in the common Af- VI.
fairs of the World, Natural Wis-
dom teaches us, that the only sure and
effectual Means of avoiding great Evils,
is the preventing of *small* ones; and that
the *Beginnings* of Mischief are much more
easily prevented, than the *Progress* of
K 2 them

Serm. them stopped, or the *Consequences* of them
VI. remedied:

Since under the Improvements of *Philosophy* in the Heathen World, the Principal and most useful Precepts given Men for the Government of their Passions, was to watch continually, and guard themselves against the *first Emotions* of Passion rising up in Opposition to Reason; to stop the first breaking out of a silent Stream, which by Neglect would swell into an overflowing Torrent; to extinguish the first Spark of a scarce discernable Fire, which by Degrees would prevail into a destroying Conflagration:

Since by the still purer and more refined Precepts of the *Doctrine of Christ*, we are obliged to govern even our very Thoughts and Desires; to pray against the *Temptations* and *first Occasions* of Sin; to lay the Ax to the Root of the Tree, by suppressing all corrupt *Affections*, by restraining all inordinate *Appetites*, by moderating and keeping even a strict Hand over innocent *Inclinations*; by plucking out, if need be, even a *right Eye*, and cutting off a *right Hand*:


Since these Things (I say) are so; it may well seem strange, to any one that is not versed in the *Jewish* Manner of speaking, how St. *Paul* should come to express

press himself after such a sort, as if he intended to indulge Men in letting loose the Reins to their Passions, as far as was consistent with Innocency; and thought it safe to permit Men to allow themselves in the Gratification of their Anger, provided they did but just keep themselves without the Borders of Sin: *Be ye Angry, and Sin not.* As if the Bounds between what is excusable and criminal, were marked with so distinct a Limit, that Men might be trusted to discern with Ease, *when* they were at the utmost Extent of their lawful Liberty; or that it could be supposed Men had so perfect a Command of themselves, as to be able to stop suddenly at an appointed Mark in a swift Career, and say (when they please) to their Passion, *hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.*

Our Saviour, in his Divine Sermon upon the Mount, makes it in almost every Instance, his peculiar Improvement of Moral Obligations under the Gospel, to warn Men against the *Approaches* and *Tendencies* towards those Sins, whereof only the *gross Acts* were forbidden under the Law.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of Mat. v 27. old Time, thou shalt not commit Adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, has already committed Adultery with her in his Heart.

Serm. Ye have heard it has been said by them of
VI. old, thou shalt not forswear thyself: But I

 say unto you, swear not at all. Ye have heard it has been said, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not Evil. Ye have heard it has been said, thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I say unto you, love your Enemies. And in the Case before us, of Wrath and Anger: Ye have heard, says he, that it has been said by them of old Time, thou shalt not kill: But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his Brother without a Cause, shall be in Danger of the Judgment; — and whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell-Fire. Nay, in some of the antientest Copies of this Gospel, those Words of Restriction, (*without Cause,*) whosoever shall be Angry *without a Cause*, are omitted; and the Declaration is made in the most general Terms. *Whosoever is angry with his Brother, shall be in danger of the Judgment*: Men being apt enough of themselves, to put in such Restrictions as may be equitably presumed; and there being no need, in the Body of the Law itself, to express such excepted Cases or such Limitations, to which in all Reason and Equity, it may, however, be supposed the Law cannot extend. This makes

makes it still the more worthy of en-
quiry, whence it might come to pass, that
St. Paul expresses himself upon this Sub-
ject in such a manner as may seem to give
some *Indulgence* to such *Degrees* of Passion
as are not directly sinful; (*Be ye angry,*
and sin not; when yet both by Experi-
ence and the Reason of Things, and by
our Saviour's express Caution in all Mat-
ters of this Nature, 'tis evident that Pas-
sions indulged to the utmost Bounds of
Innocency, are much harder to restrain
from entring into sinful Degrees, than it
was to prevent their Beginnings or arising
at first.

Now the true Account of this Matter,
seems plainly to be this. The Words, *Be*
ye Angry, are not a Permission, as they
may seem to be when taken alone; but,
according to the Nature and Use of the
Jewish Language, they are Part of a *Single*
Proposition with those that follow.
Be ye Angry, and Sin not; that is, *Take*
heed and beware of sinful Anger. Indulge
not Anger, lest ye fall into Sin. Or, *If*
at any Time ye be provoked, then take
particular Care that ye fall not into Sin.
For such is the Idiom of the *Jewish*
Language; to express that in *two* distinct
Propositions, which ought so to be under-
stood, as if they were put in *one*. There

Serm. are many other Texts in Scripture, which
 VI. will confirm this Interpretation; and the
 comparing them with this, will reciprocally afford much Light, towards the true Understanding of several of those Passages.

In the old Testament; *Mal. i. 2, 3. Jacob have I loved, saith God, and Esau have I hated.* The Propositions are not to be understood asunder, but to be taken together as one; *Jacob have I loved more than Esau.* For, GOD did not intend to express *Hatred* towards *Esau*, but only to love *Jacob* comparatively, with a great Love. *Nahum iii. 14. Fortify strong holds, ——— there ——— shall the Sword cut thee off:* The Intention is not to exhort *Nineveh* to fortify herself; but to declare, how much soever she does fortify herself, yet shall the Sword cut her off. And so *Isai. viii. 9. Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in Pieces. i. e. How much soever ye strengthen your selves, yet shall ye be broken.* Again, *Ecclus. xxx. 9. Cocker thy Child, and he shall make thee afraid; play with him, and he will bring thee to Heaviness:* The Proposition is but one; if thou indulge thy Child, he will bring thee to Sorrow. *Jer. vii. 22. I spake not unto your Fathers, nor commanded them in the Day that I brought them out*

of the Land of Egypt, concerning Burnt- Offerings or Sacrifices; but this Thing commanded I them, saying, obey my Voice : Serm. VI.

The two Parts of this Sentence of the Prophet, are not to be taken separately, as if he affirmed that God did *not* require Burnt-Offerings at all; (for 'tis certain he *did* command them in most *express* Words in the Law;) but the whole is to be understood together, that God did not *insist* upon Burnt-Offerings *so much*, as upon Obedience to the Commandments of the *Moral Law*. There is a like Expression, *Hos. vi. 6. I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice*: The Meaning is not, that God did not require Sacrifice; but that he desired Mercy, *rather* than Sacrifice; and as it follows in the very next Words) *the Knowledge of the Lord, more than Burnt-Offerings*. And thus also must be understood that Passage in *Ezekiel Chap. xx. 25. I gave them also Statutes that were not good, and Judgments by which they should not live*: The Meaning is not, evil Statutes; God forbid; But Statutes, which *comparatively* were not good; and Judgments which were not so profitable, as moral ones, to cause them to live.

In the *new* Testament, the same Manner of Expression, agreeable to the Nature of the *Jewish* Language, is likewise frequently

Serm. frequently used; and it is necessary to be
 VI. taken Notice of, in order to the true un-
 derstanding of several Passages. *I am not
 sent*, saith our Saviour himself, discoursing
 with the Woman of Canaan, *but to the
 lost Sheep of the House of Israel*; St. Mat.
 xv. 24. His Meaning is not absolute, (as
 might seem from the first Part of the
 Sentence,) that he was not sent *at all* to
 any others than the *Jews* only; but that
 he was not sent so *soon*, so *immediately*, so
principally; his Mission was not to be
 made known so *early*, to any other Na-
 tion, as to the *lost Sheep of the House of
 Israel*. For that he *was* also, in process
 of *Time*, to be a Light to lighten the *Gen-
 tiles*, as well as to be the Glory of his Peo-
 ple *Israel*, the Scripture of the Prophets
 expressly enough declared; and our Savi-
 our himself in this very Place sufficiently
 intimates, when immediately after that
 seeming Refusal, yet he effectually grant-
 ed this Stranger's Request, by healing the
 Infirmary of her Daughter. And in his
 Instructions to his Disciples, chap. x. 5.
 he speaks with less Obscurity; *Go not into
 the Way of the Gentiles*; ——— *but go rather
 to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel*.
 Which afterwards was still *more clearly*
 expressed by the Apostles, *Acts* xiii. 46.
*It was necessary that the Word of God
 should*

should first be spoken to the Jews; but afterwards to the Gentiles. But not to mention any other Places, there is one Expression of St. Paul, of this Nature, more remarkable to the present Purpose, than any other Passage in the whole Scripture. In the 6th Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, at the 17th Verse; *God be thanked, saith he, that ye were the Servants of Sin: But ye have obeyed from the Heart that Form of Doctrine, which was delivered you. God be thanked, that ye were the Servants of Sin: It may seem a very strange and unusual Expression, according to the Manner of speaking in modern Languages: But in the Jewish Idiom it was very intelligible, that the two Parts of the Sentence should be taken as one; God be thanked, for that ye, who once were the Servants of Sin, have since obeyed from the Heart that Form of Doctrine, which was delivered you.*

And thus likewise in the Words of the Text; *Be ye Angry, and Sin not. That is, Take heed and beware of sinful Anger; indulge not Anger, lest ye fall into Sin; or, if at any Time ye be provoked, then take particular Care that ye fall not into Sin.*

It is the same Caution, as in the Government of all other Passions or Desires.

So

Serm.
VI.


Serm.

VI.

W

So use the World, as not *abusing* it ; So rejoice, as though ye *rejoiced* not ; So weep, as those that *wept* not ; So be angry, as that ye *sin* not. The Meaning of the Words, being thus explain'd : That which remains, is, *1st*, that I endeavour, in a practical Manner, to represent unto you, what the *Kind* or *Degree* of that Anger is, which must be charged as Sinful. And *2dly*, That I briefly set before you some of the *Mischiefs* and *Inconveniencies*, of allowing our Passion to arise to such a sinful Degree.

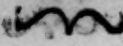
Before I enter upon which Heads, it may be proper to premise two Things. *1st*, That what shall be said concerning the Nature of *Anger* in particular, may with little Variation be easily applied in general to the Government of all other Passions whatsoever. So that though the present Subject of my Discourse be *particular*, yet, by serious Meditation, it may without Difficulty be made *universally* useful towards regulating the Conduct of human Life. And *2dly*, That those Things which Scholastick Writers upon this Subject, have made burdensome to the Memory, and intricate to the Understanding, by numerous Definitions, and more nice than necessary Distinctions ; I shall endeavour to reduce under one single Head, that, what to Persons of all *Capacities* is their Duty

Duty to *practise*, may, without affording Matter for Dispute or Subtilty, be by all Persons equally *understood*. Serm. VI. 

1. These Things being premised ; I proceed 1st to enquire, what the *Kind* or *Degree* of that Anger is, which must be charged as Sinful. And this will best be understood, by considering briefly what the Nature and Use of our Passions is, and for what Intent they were implanted in us by our all-wise Creator.

Where *Reason* and Understanding are perfect ; there is no Room for any Passion or Commotion. And therefore in the most perfect Being, there is *no* Passion. In *God*, there is, properly speaking, neither Anger nor Complacency, neither Love nor Hatred, neither Joy nor Sorrow. In Him, there is no such Thing as Desire or Aversion ; no such Commotion, as either Hope or Fear. But his Actions are determined always by perfect and unmixed Reason, by eternal and unchangeable Equity ; which, in the supreme Mind, is an uninterrupted Calmness, like the Serenity of the highest Heavens. For, though the Scripture does indeed represent to *Us* the Divine Actions, as proceeding from Passions like to ours ; yet this is *not* representing them what they are really in *him*, but only in Condescension to the Weak-

Serm. Weakness of *our* Apprehensions, or with
VI. Regard to their Effects upon *Us*. And

 as, in the same Scripture, *Hands* and *Feet*, and *Eyes* are figuratively ascribed to him, who, in reality, without Shape or Figure is in all Places every where alike present; so by the like *Analogy* only it is, that to God are sometimes ascribed *Passions*, for which there is no Place in a Mind where Reason and Understanding are perfect.

On the contrary, where there is *no Reason* nor proper Understanding *at all*; as in Creatures inferior to us; there, *Passions* and *Appetites* are the *only* Springs of Action; and by them are *irrational* *Creatures* naturally and unavoidably directed.

Men, who (like *Beasts*) are formed out of the *Dust of the Earth*, and yet (like *Angels*) made *after the Image of God*; are of a *middle* Nature between these two States, between perfect *Reason* and mere irrational *Appetites*: Being endued with *Appetites* and *Passions*, to *excite* and stir them up to Action, where their bare abstract *Understanding* would leave them too *remiss*; and at the same Time indued with Reason also, to govern and restrain themselves, where *mere Appetites* and *Passions* would hurry them on to Things exorbitant and unreasonable. Herein therefore particularly lies the principal
Duty

Duty of *Man*; in keeping his Passions Serm.
 subject to Reason, and in governing his VI.
 Appetites by that Understanding, where-
 with God has distinguished him from the
 inferior Creation.

The *Affections* and *Passions* are not in themselves *evil*, (as some of the Antient Philosophers vainly imagined;) but were implanted in us by the wise Author of all Things, for excellent Ends and very useful Purposes: That we, whose mixt Nature of Body and Spirit, would otherwise have made us too remiss, in pursuing the Ends to which bare abstract Reason directed us; might by the Affections and Passions, under the Regulation of Reason, and subservient to it, *i. e.* by reasonable Fears and Hopes, by Love and Hatred, by Anger or Complacency, be pushed on and *excited* to be more earnest and vigorous, more constant and diligent in all those Actions of Life, which Reason *directs*, and the Affections *execute*.

But now, when the Passions, instead of *obeying* Reason, over-rule and govern it; when they prevail against Reason, so as to put Men upon doing Things which the Reason of their Minds at the same Time forbids; or, (which is much the same Thing,) when they become so violent as to abridge Men of their Liberty, and put
 them

Serm. them *beside* their Reason ; so as to leave
 VI. them no Room or Time to judge, whether the Thing they are doing be reasonable or no ; *then* it is, that the Passions become truly sinful. And *Man*, who when *Reason* governs him, is the Image of *God* ; degenerates, by the Dominion of *Passion*, even below the Nature of a *Beast*. For those inferior Creatures, when they obey their Appetites, follow their Nature : But the Nature of *Man*, is to obey a higher Principle, even *Reason* and the *Law of God* ; to which, he who is governed by *Passion*, is not subject, neither indeed can be ; and therefore degenerates below his proper Nature. Which is a Folly, whereof inferior Beings are not guilty.

From hence it becomes very evident, (which was the *first* Thing propos'd,) what the *Kind* or *Degree* of that *Anger* is, which must be charged as Sinful : Namely, that it is then such, when it either puts Men *besides* the Use of their Reason, or upon acting in any sort *contrary* to it.

The Rule is *one*, and may without Difficulty be universally understood by *all* Men ; But the Application is *infinite*, and must be made by *every one* for his own *Particular*. Every Person knows, when
 he

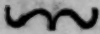
he considers seriously with himself; that his Anger becomes then a sinful Passion, when it is stirred up *without just Cause*, or upon *any Cause* vents itself in *undecent Effects*; when it spoils his Temper by *frequent Returns*, or by its *Violence* exposes him to unseemly *Transports*, or by † its *Continuance* degenerates into Hatred and Malice, when its *Height* is disproportionate to the *Occasion* that raised it, or unbecoming the *Character* of the Person provoked; or the *Circumstances* be in any wise contrary to right Reason and Religion. Which Cases, though they are indeed *infinitely various*, and therefore cannot be expressed in any methodical Direction; yet because the Rule (as was said) is but *one* and unchangeably the same, therefore the Application in Practice is always *Easy*: *Easy* (I mean) *to be understood*, that a Man is *then* always to look upon his Passion as sinful, when it either puts him beside the Use of his Reason, or upon acting any thing *contrary* to it: But not always so easy to be practised: Because habitual Passions, are very apt to Surprise Men; and will not be prevented, but by a *constant Guard*. Yet, because 'tis a *necessary Duty*, so to prevent and

† *Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath*: The Words immediately following the Text.

guard

Serm.

VI.



guard against them ; therefore in order to persuade Men to set about the Practice of what is so indispensable and of so great Importance, 'tis proper that I proceed now in the

II. *Second Place*, to consider some of the *Mischiefs* and *Inconveniencies*, of allowing our Passions to prevail, in any of the forementioned *Kinds* or *Degrees*.

And here we cannot but take Notice, that even the *Heathen* Moralists themselves, have filled their Discourses with Arguments against irregular and disorderly Passions ; drawn from the *Indecency* and *Unseemliness* of the *Thing it self* ; from the *Shame* and *Indignity*, of a *reasonable Creature's* being subject to such *unreasonable Slavery* ; from the *Uneasiness* of it, to *ourselves* ; from the *Injuriousness* of it, to *Others* ; and from many other Considerations, which prove a Man, who is governed by his Passion, to be incapable even of true *Philosophy*, incapable of coming up to so much as the moral Improvements even of a wise *Heathen*.

And the *Scripture* itself sometimes makes use of such *Natural Arguments*. From the *Folly* of the *Thing it self*, Eccles. vii. 9. *Be not hasty in thy Spirit to be angry ; For Anger resteth in the Bosom of Fools*. Prov. xii. 16. *A Fool's Wrath is presently known, but a pru-*

prudent Man covereth Shame; and chap. xiv. ver. 17, 29. He that is slow to Wrath, is of great Understanding; but he that is soon angry, dealeth foolishly; and he that is hasty of Spirit, exalteth Folly. Again, from the Contempt it draws upon Men, who are observed to be guilty of this Weakness; Prov. xxv. 28. He that hath no Rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that is broken down, and without Walls. From the frequent Mischiefs and Damages it brings upon them; Prov. xix. 19. A Man of great Wrath, shall suffer Punishment; for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again: And Job v. 2. Wrath killeth the foolish Man, and Envy slayeth the silly one. Also, from the natural Excellency of the contrary Practice; Prov. xvi. 32. He that is slow to Anger, is better than the Mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City.

But to us Christians, there are still higher Arguments to convince us of the Mischief of being governed by our Passions; and to persuade us of the Necessity, of restraining them within due Bounds. For Us, to indulge our Passions, is to deprive our selves wholly of that Temper, that Frame and Disposition of Mind, which is the peculiar Character and Obligation of a Christian. If a *Philosopher*, if a *wise Heathen*, upon the common Principles of

Serm. Reason and Morality ; if a *Man*, upon
 VI. the bare Consideration of the Dignity of
 his *Nature* above the Beasts that perish ;
 is under Obligation to subdue his Appetites and Passions to Reason : How much more is a *Christian* bound, to keep himself still under stricter and more severe Restraints ?

For when a *Christian* indulges his Passion, let him consider *who* it is, that acts so unworthily, and behaves himself so unseemly. A Man indued with *Reason* and Understanding : A Man, whose Reason is improved, not by *Philosophy* only, but moreover by the Knowledge of the *revealed Will* of God : A Man, for whom *Christ* dyed ; to whom *God* has been freely reconciled, and, out of mere Mercy and undeserved Compassion, vouchsafed to turn away his Anger from him.

And against *whom* does this Person direct the Violence of his Passion ? Against a *Man* like himself ; against his *Friend* or his *Brother*, Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh ; one for *whom* *Christ* dyed as well as for himself, and by his own Blood redeem'd them *Both* from Death.

And *what* is it *for*, that one Christian Man, is fiercely angry against another ? Perhaps for a *careless Word*, for an *undesign'd Provocation*, for a *difference in Opinion* ; possibly for retaining a good Conscience

ence, and not daring to do what the other expects of him; at most, for some slight and trivial *Offence*, for not being able to repay him his hundred *Pence*, when God has forgiven them both their ten thousand *Talents*.

Serm.

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W

Not that one Christian may not, in a just and legal Manner, *compel* another to do what is right and equitable: Much less that Superiors should not by their Authority *oblige* Inferiors, to perform the proper Duties of their respective Stations: But that in these, and all other Cases, *Religion and Equity* be the *Ground*, and *Reason*, not *Passion*, the *Measure* of the *Compulsion*.

If any Thing in the World could make exorbitant *Passion* excusable, it should seem to be when *Vice* is the Object of the Displeasure, and Concern for the *Honour of God*, the Cause of the Commotion. Nevertheless, even in *this* Case, our Saviour himself, when he was not only *reviled*, but was reviled also with *Blasphemy* against God himself, yet *reviled not again*. And *Michael the Archangel*, when contending with the Devil, yet did not bring against him a railing *Accusation*, but said, the Lord rebuke thee; *Jude ix*. And the Scripture accordingly directs, that a *Servant of God must not strive, but be gentle unto all*

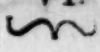
Serm.

VI.

Men, apt to teach, patient; in Meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth. For the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, St. Jam. iii. 17. And St. Paul exhorts, Eph. iv. 31. Let all Bitterness and Wrath and Anger and Clamour and Evil-speaking be put away from you, with all Malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted; forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

There is a remarkable History to this Purpose in the Book of *Jonah*, where, upon God's repenting to execute his Threatnings upon *Nineveh*, *Jonah* was displeased at it exceedingly, and he was very angry, and persisted in it, that he did well to be angry, even unto Death. But God reprov'd him by the Similitude of a Gourd, at which *Jonah* was grieved when it perished suddenly; and the Lord said unto him, *Thou hast Pity on the Gourd, which came up in a Night, and perished in a Night, and should not I spare Nineveh, that great City?*

When once a Man, whatever the Occasion be, gives himself up to his *Passion*, he is then out of the Use of his *Reason*, and he can never tell to what Degree of
Unrea-

Unreasonableness he may be pusht on. *An Serm.*
angry Man stirreth up strife, and a furious VI.
Person will abound in transgression. Prov. 
 xxix. 22. As *Cain's causeless* Displea-
 sure against his Brother, increased by De-
 grees beyond Limit, till it ended in Mur-
 der, so *Passion* let loose, even upon the
 most *just Provocation*, is like a Torrent
 breaking thro' a Bank; which will hard-
 ly be prevented from swelling 'till it leads
 us into Sin. *My Beloved*, saith St. *James*,
let every Man be ——— slow to Wrath; for
the Wrath of Man (even tho' it be against
 what is *Evil*;) yet *worketh not the righte-*
ousness of God.

The *Cause* of such disorderly Passions,
 is always *Carelessness* and want of *Serious-*
ness: The *Remedy* is, *Consideration*, *Atten-*
tion, and frequent Examination of a Man's
 self; so as to keep a constant Guard and
 Watchfulness over his Spirit. To be
 able *perfectly* to cure his Temper, to
 conquer himself *wholly*, and change his
 Disposition; is what no one ought to ex-
 pect in this World; nor to be disappoint-
 ed or discouraged, if he finds even the
moderating it to be a Work of Difficulty
 and Time. But to *endeavour* to amend
 it *daily*, is his indispensable Duty. And
 he who considers how easily and suddenly
 he can restrain himself, at the coming in
 of a *Superiour* whom he reveres among

Serm. *Men*; must not pretend it impossible for
 VI. him to govern his Passions, with the
 Thoughts of the perpetual Presence of God.

There have been some, who have al-
 leged in Excuse for themselves, that Pas-
 sage in Scripture, that the Apostles them-
 selves were *Men of like Passions with us*,
 Acts xiv. 15. But the Intent of that Pas-
 sage is much misunderstood, through an
 improper Translation. For the Intention
 of St. Paul and Barnabas speaking in that
 Manner to the Men of *Lystra*, was not to
 say that they were Men of like Passions, in
 the Sense we now usually understand the
 Word; but that they were Men of *like*
Infirmities, *mortal Men* like themselves,
 subject to *Diseases*, *Casualties*, and *Death*;
 and therefore, not to be worshipped as
 Gods. So *Jam. v. 17. Elias was a Man*
subject to like Passions as we are: The mean-
 ing is not, that he was a *passionate*, but
 that he was a *mortal* Man like one of us,
 and yet interceded effectually with God.
 But if the Meaning was literal, that the
 Apostles and Prophets had the same *Passions*
with Us, (as undoubtedly they natu-
 rally had) yet this is no Excuse for *Us*,
 unless, like *them*, we govern them also by
 the Rules of Reason and Religion. *Be ye*
Angry, and Sin not. Now unto the only
wise God, &c.

A
SERMON

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St. James's
Westminster, Decemb. 16, 1720.
being the Day of Fasting and
Humiliation, for beseeching God
to preserve us from the Plague.

ISAIAH xxvi. 9.

*When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the
Inhabitants of the World will learn Right-
eousness.*

BESIDES the general Evidences
of the Being and Providence of
God which appear in the Fabrick
of the Universe, in the Contrivance and
wise Disposition of all the Works of Na-
ture, and in the great Providential Events
which to the several Nations of the Earth
declare in some Degree his Government
over Mankind: I say, Besides these *gene-
ral* Evidences of Providence, the Scripture
has moreover given us a *particular* and
standing

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VII.
~

Serm. standing Example of it, in the History of
 VII. the *Jewish* Nation. *That* People, in a *sin-*
gular Manner, did God deliver out of the
Egyptian Bondage, by Signs and Wonders
 and mighty Works. *Them* did he lead
 thro' the Wilderness like a Flock of Sheep,
 and with an out-stretched Arm brought
 them through innumerable Dangers to the
 Borders of his promised Land. Before
them did he drive out many Potent Peo-
 ple, and planted them in the room of
 those idolatrous Nations. Upon *them*,
 when they corrupted themselves and de-
 parted from his Ways, did he frequently
 inflict very severe Judgments, by Way of
 exemplary Correction, raising them up
 new Enemies round about them: And
 when they returned unto him again, he
 forgave their Misdeeds, and destroyed
 them not, but delivered them again out
 of the Hands of their Enemies. The *Eff-*
fects these various Dispensations of Provi-
 dence had upon *particular Persons* among
 that People, were very different, accord-
 ing to the Temper and Disposition of the
 Persons. Those of them, who were very
 corrupt, who loved the idolatrous Rites
 of the Nations that surrounded them, and
 the Debaucheries that attended those ido-
 latrous Practices, became more and more
 corrupt in the Times of *Prosperity*, and
 in the Days of *Adversity* they hardened
 their

their Hearts against God. When the *Serm.*
Wrath of God came upon them, and slew the VII.
wealthiest of them, and smote down the cho-
sen Men that were in Israel: For all this
they sinned yet more, and believed not his won-
drous Works, Psal. lxxviii. 32. And when
God worked for them miraculous Deli-
verances, still they kept not the Covenant of
God, and would not walk in his Law: But
forgot what he had done, and the wonderful
Works that he had shewed for them, Ver. 12.
The mighty Signs and Wonders they
continually saw, grew familiar unto them;
and by Degrees made *no more Impression*
upon them, than the Works of Nature,
which are indeed continual Miracles,
make *now* upon Atheistical and profane
Minds. But *others* among them, observ-
ed the Works of God, and the Dispen-
sations of his Providence, and laid up all
these Things in their Minds; and were
influenced thereby to obey his Command-
ments, and to serve him with an upright
Heart. And *some*, who in the Days of
Prosperity forgot themselves, and were
carried away with the Stream of a dege-
nerate and corrupt World; yet, when
the *Judgments* of God appeared, their
Heart was tender, and their Conscience
smote them, and they returned and repent-
ed of their evil Ways, and amended their
Lives, and gave Glory to God. *Ver. 5,*
He

Serm. *He bringeth down them that dwell on high ;*
 VII. *the lofty City he layeth it low, even to the*
 ~~~~~ *Ground, he bringeth it even to the Dust.——*

*In the Way of thy Judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee ; the Desire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the Remembrance of thee. With my Soul have I desired thee in the Night, yea, with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early. For when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.*

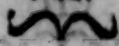
The *Doctrinal Proposition* plainly contained in the Words, and which will therefore be the Subject of the following Discourse, is this: that the Design and the proper Effect of the Judgments of God in this World, is to awaken Sinners, and to bring them by Repentance to the Practice of Righteousness. *When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.*

*Righteousness* is the Practice of that which is in itself Right and Fit to be done. And, were there no Rewards or Punishments annexed either by God or Man, other than what essentially arise from the good or evil Actions themselves; yet that which is Right, would still always be reasonable to be done; and the Nature of Wickedness would be still always what it is. Upon this Ground it is, that God, who

who is infinitely above all Hope or Fear; Sermon.  
to whose Happiness nothing can be added, VII.  
and nothing diminished from it, yet essentially loves Righteousness and Truth, and  
steadily and unalterably chooses always to  
do what is just and Good. *Inferior* rational Beings, so far as they are influenced  
by *Reason*, do the same; and see, and esteem, and judge of Things, as they really are. But *all finite Beings* are, in their  
several Proportions and Degrees, *fallible*. And the Reason which is in *Men*, is  
weak; liable to be darkened by *Ignorance*, to be blinded by *Prejudices*, to be  
seduced by *Appetites*, to be over-ruled by *Passions* and unreasonable *Affections*. These  
are the Springs of Wickedness among Men. To prevent the ill Effects whereof  
God has been pleased to *add Weight* on the Side of Virtue and Righteousness, by the  
Sanction of *Rewards* and *Punishments*. The *Rewards* which God has annexed to  
the Practice of Virtue, either in this Life or the next, are of such a Nature; that  
the having *Regard to those Rewards*, does not destroy the intrinsic Excellence of  
Virtue, or make the Practice of it at all *mercenary*; because, the Idea of God being  
the Notion of a Being infinitely Holy, Righteous and Good; the Love of *him*,  
and the Desire of continuing in *his Favour*  
and



Serm.  
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and of being *Blessed* by him, is either in Effect the same thing, or at least is coincident with, the Love and Virtue and Goodness itself. *Punishments* likewise, when considered as coming from *God*, are of such a Nature, that good Actions arising from the Fear of his Displeasure, do not lose the Nature of *true Virtue*; Because, God being infinitely removed from all Possibility of Error, Arbitrariness, or any evil Disposition whatsoever; Men cannot possibly by the Fear or Sense of *his* Anger, be excited or moved to do any Action, but what at the same Time they must of Necessity be convinced in their own Minds, is Fit and Right and Reasonable for them to do. And Punishments inflicted by *Men*; were they always faithfully and righteously applied, that is, were they never, except in Cases of necessary *Self-Defence*, made use of to any other Purpose, than upon the Foundation of the acknowledged Difference between Good and Evil, to compel Men to do what they themselves well know is their *Duty* to do; were this (I say) constantly the Case, Punishment from *Men* would then be of the same Nature, and have proportionably the same Effect, as Punishment from the Hand of *Providence*. But the Errors and Passions of Mankind, having too frequently brought great Confusion

sion into their Manner of dealing with each other; the right Use therefore and Application of Men's *Hopes* and *Fears* to the Purposes of Religion, is to turn them towards the most proper Object, the *Favour* or *Displeasure* of God. Now *Fear* being the *stronger* and more powerful Affection, than *Hope*; hence the *Judgments* of God, either *seen* or *felt*, either inflicted upon *ourselves*, or observed on *others*, are apt to work upon Men more effectually to bring them to Repentance, than the Observation of numerous Instances of the Divine Mercy and Goodness. In the Words immediately following my Text, and as a Confirmation of the Truth of the Proposition therein contained, that *When God's JUDGMENTS are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness*; In Confirmation of this Truth, let *FAVOUR* (says the Prophet) *be shown to the Wicked, yet will he not learn Righteousness; in the Land of Uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the Majesty of the Lord: Lord, when thy Hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they SHALL see, and be ashamed: The Terrours of the Lord will force them to see, and they shall be ashamed. The Greatest of all the Temporal Terrours of the Lord, is Death: Death, which puts an End to all worldly Considerations, and consigns*  
Men

Serm. 2 Men over to an unalterable Eternity.

VII.

W

When this Messenger of the Divine Judicature apparently approaches; there is no Man so void of Sense, as not to begin *then at least* to be seriously solicitous, what the Event of that Judgment will be, to which he perceives himself going without Délay. The *Reason why* he should be thus solicitous, is the same at all other times. For near or far off, still Death is equally certain; *and after that the Judgment*. And how distant soever Death may at any Time seem to be from any particular Person, yet, even at that *greatest* seeming Distance, it *must of Necessity* be very near, it may be nearer than can be conceived. But Men are careless and stupid; and the Heat of Passions corrupts their Sense, the Deceitfulness of Riches blinds their Eyes, the Pleasures of Life steal from them their Understandings; and they willingly suffer the thinnest Mist to hide from them the clearest Light, and the meanest Trifle to divert them from the Thoughts of their eternal Interest. This is the Lethargy which in Time of Health and Prosperity, is apt to *stifle* the general Notices which God has given Men of himself in the standing Use both of Reason and Revelation. To awaken Men therefore from this State of Insensibility, God is pleased *sometimes* to *strengthen* these *general* Notices, by more  
parti-

particular and more immediately affecting Warnings; by *Threatnings* of impending Judgments upon *ourselves*, or by *Examples* of his inflicting them upon *others*. By these, he excites Mens Consideration and Attention, quells the Eagerness of ungoverned Passions, and lays open to them the Folly of Ambition and Covetousness. By these, as 'tis elegantly expressed in the Book of *Job* ch. xxxiii. 16. by These he openeth the Ears of Men, and sealeth their Instruction; That he may withdraw Man from his Purpose, and hide Pride from Man. And ch. xxxvi. 8. If they be bound in Fetters, and held in Cords of Affliction; then God sheweth them their Work, and their Transgression, that they have exceeded: He openeth also their Ear to Discipline, and commandeth that they return from their Iniquity. All temporal Judgments therefore whatsoever, are properly of a medicinal Nature, and mercifully intended for our Benefit: All of them without Exception, for the Benefit of such as shall take Warning from them in *others*; and all those of them which are short of Death, for the Benefit even of the *Persons themselves* on whom they fall. It is good for me, says the Psalmist, that I have been afflicted: For, before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now I have learnt thy Precepts. The gentle Admonitions of



Serm. Afflictions sent upon particular Persons,  
 VII. are the *still Voice* of the divine Patience,  
 calling Sinners to Repentance: And the  
 severest Calamities even of *publick* and *na-*  
*tional* Desolations, Fire and Sword, Dearths  
 and Famines, Plagues and Pestilences, are  
 yet of the *same* Nature; being the *louder*  
*Calls*, and as it were the *Thunder* of the Al-  
 mighty's Threatnings; *necessary* sometimes,  
 and even these not always sufficient, to  
 rouse up the Senses of a hard and stupid,  
 of a vicious and debauched World. 'Tis  
*no Pleasure* to the Almighty, to grieve the  
 Children of Men: And 'tis with the high-  
 est Eloquence of *affectionate* Expressions,  
 that the Scripture constantly sets forth to  
 us, how unwilling God is to execute his  
 severer Threatnings, how ready always  
 to remove his Judgments upon Mens true  
 Repentance, and how he searches as it  
 were for *every* Argument, and *every* Mo-  
 tive of Compassion: *Shall I not spare*  
*Nineveh, that great City, wherein are*  
*more than sixscore thousand Persons that*  
*know not their right Hand from their left?*  
*Nay, shall I not spare Sodom,* does the  
 Scripture represent him saying within him-  
 self; shall I not spare it for the sake of  
*ten Righteous*, if so many can be found  
 therein? But that the *severest* of the di-  
 vine Judgments, are sometimes *absolutely*  
*neces-*

*necessary*; and that the Corruption of the Serm. VII.  
World; were it to be always in a *continued* and *uninterrupted Prosperity*, would  
be *altogether intolerable*; is apparent from  
hence, that even *these Judgments themselves*, *seen* inflicted upon *others*, nay even  
*felt* inflicted upon *Mens selves*, even *These*  
very frequently prove *ineffectual*. How  
often, when we see great Calamities be-  
fal our Neighbours; instead of being  
warned thereby to amend our *own* Lives,  
do we turn it only into an Occasion of  
Uncharitableness in censuring *others*!  
which Spirit is very affectionately re-  
proved by our Saviour, *Luke xiii. 2. Sup-*  
*pose ye that these Galilæans, whose Blood*  
*Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices, were*  
*Sinners above all the Galilæans, because they*  
*suffered such Things? I tell you, nay, but ex-*  
*cept ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or*  
*those eighteen, upon whom the Tower in Si-*  
*loam fell, and slew them; think ye that they*  
*were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in*  
*Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except*  
*ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Nay,  
how frequently do the severest of God's  
Judgments inflicted upon a Nation or  
People; the last and loudest Call to Re-  
pentance, after which there remains no  
Remedy against final Excision; how of-  
ten do these prove ineffectual, to awaken

Serm. VII. *even those very Persons upon whom they are inflicted, and leave them in an incorrigible Impenitency, hardened to Destruction ! Thus of King Ahaz we find it recorded, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. that in the time of his Distress, he trespassed yet more against the Lord : This is that King Ahaz. And of the whole People of Israel, in a most eloquent Complaint by the Prophet Amos, ch. iv. 6 ; I have given you Want of Bread in all your Cities ; — I have smitten you with Blasting and Mildew, when your Gardens and your Vineyards the Palmer-worm devoured ; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the Pestilence after the manner of Egypt, and your young Men have I slain with the Sword ; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a Firebrand pluckt out of the Burning ; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. In like manner in the new Testament, speaking of the Punishment of the Nations in the latter Days, which call themselves Christians ; Rev. ix. 20, 21. The rest of the Men which were not killed by these Plagues, yet repented not — of their Murders, nor of their Sorceries, nor of their Fornication, nor of their Thefts : Of their Sorceries ; that is, of all their superstitious Methods of making*

making Men fancy themselves to be religious, by what *others* can do for or to them, or by what they can do for themselves, without the Practice of Righteousness and true Virtue. And Ch. xvi. 9. *Men were scorched with great Heat, and blasphemed the Name of God who hath Power over these Plagues; and they repented not, to give him Glory; — But blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their Pains, — and repented not of their Deeds.* In this Passage, (*Men repented not, to give him Glory,*) 'tis worthy of Observation, by the Way, wherein consists the true and Scripture-Notion of the *Glory of God*. It consists in reasonable Creatures living, (under a due and constant Sense of the Divine Government,) according to the Rules of Reason, of everlasting Righteousness, Goodness and Truth. And *Sinners* have no other possible Way of *giving Glory to God*, but by repenting of their evil Deeds, that is, amending their Lives, obeying the *everlasting Gospel*, and forsaking those Vices which are opposite to God's Kingdom of Virtue and Righteousness. Which Observation may be of good Use, for preventing many wrong Notions concerning the Nature of true Religion, and of the *Glory of God*. But to proceed. The Reason why the Judgments, the severest and most awakening Judgments of God, even

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VII.

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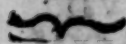


Serm. those which cannot fail to convince Men  
 VII. of the Transitoriness, and Uncertainty,  
 and Vanity of every Thing here below;  
 do yet nevertheless very often prove *ineffectual* to cause Sinners *thus* to give Glory to God by bringing them to true Repentance; the Reason (I say) why even these Judgments often fail of this Effect, is a confused, uncertain, inattentive sort of Infidelity; which, ascribing all Calamities to *second* Causes, and lamenting them only as unavoidable *natural Disasters*, looks not up to the Hand of the *first* Cause, which steers and directs the whole Course of Nature. *Wars* and *Desolations*, we see, arise from the Passions of Men. *Famines*, are owing to Accidents of Wind and Weather. *Plagues* and *Pestilences*, those great destroying Angels, possibly *are* or however *may be imagined to be*, Vapours and Steams out of the Earth. And because the Grounds of these Things appear in *Nature*, therefore weak and foolish Men, intent upon the Weapon only, and not upon him who *strikes* with it, regard not to give Glory to the God of Nature. Whereas in Truth and Reality, *NATURE* is nothing but an empty Word; and the *Course of Nature* (as 'tis vulgarly called) excepting only the Operations of free Agents, is merely an *abstract Notion*  
 or

or Expression of the *regularity* of his Operations, who made and governs all things. Even the Counsels and Designs of Men, are, by Incidents unforeseen to them, perpetually over-ruled to quite different Events, than they intended or could possibly imagine. But as to *UNINTELLIGENT Natural Causes*; whatever they seem to effect, is not in reality done by them at all, but by the Providence of God. That the *Sun runs* its Course every Day, is no less strictly and properly the Hand of God, than that it stood still one Day. Nor is there any other Reason, why *supernatural Miracles* are by all Men readily ascribed to God, when the equally great *Miracles of Nature* are vulgarly fancied to be done without him; for this (I say) there is no other than this one foolish Reason, that what God doth *once*, Men see and acknowledge is done by him; but what he does *always*, they therefore think 'tis not he does it *at all*. The Scripture (and Reason also) teaches us more justly, to *acknowledge God in all our Ways*. That 'tis *he*, who causes *HIS Sun* to rise, and sends us *Rain and fruitful Seasons*. That 'tis *he*, who (in the Psalmist's Expression) *maketh the Grass to grow upon the Mountains*; giving even to the *BEAST* his Food, and to the young Ravens which call upon him.

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That, without him, not a Sparrow falls to the Ground, but even the very Hairs of our Head are all numbred. That 'tis he alone, who gives us richly all Things to enjoy; even all those Things, which, in a vulgar and careless way of speaking, we usually ascribe to natural and inanimate Causes. Which very same Causes, whensoever he pleases, he can make to be the Instruments of our Punishment, as well as of our Support. He can (as Moses elegantly expresses it;) Make the Heavens over our Heads, to be Brass; and the Earth under our Feet, Iron. He can punish with the Pestilence that walketh in Darknes, and with the Sicknes that destroyeth at the Noon-Day. He can scorch with Drought, or drown with Moisture, or blast with unwholsome Winds; in order to destroy with Famine, and make a fruitful Land barren, for the Wickednes of them that dwell therein. Or, without removing the Blessings themselves of Nature, he can at any time withdraw the Benefit and the Effects of them. When God with Rebukes doth chasten Man for Sin, he maketh his Beauty to consume away, as it were a Moth fretting a Garment, Pl. xxxix. 11. So that, besides God's more visible Judgments upon a Nation or People, they will sometimes by a secret Curse insensibly decay in their Rich-

es and their Strength. They will, they know not how, be strangely impoverish-  
ed in the very midst of Plenty, and weak-  
ened even by the greatest Successes;  
while they see not by what silent Steps  
and imperceptible Degrees (like *grey Hairs*  
and the *Infirmities of old Age*) Poverty  
and Weakness steal in upon them. By  
these various Methods, does the divine  
Patience awaken and call Men to Repen-  
tance. After which, if (in the Prophet's  
Expression) *the People turneth not unto him  
that smiteth them, neither will they seek the  
Lord of Hosts*: If, when *thou hast stricken  
them, they have not grieved; when thou hast  
consumed them, they have refused to receive  
Correction, they have made their Faces har-  
der than a Rock, they have refused to return*:  
There then remains nothing, but that se-  
verest of all temporal Threatnings, Jer.  
ii. 19. *Thine OWN WICKEDNESS  
shall correct thee, and thy Backslidings shall  
reprove thee.* Thus did God deal with the  
antient Jews, Ps. lxxxi. 11. *My People  
would not hearken unto my Voice, and Israel  
would not obey me: So I gave them up unto  
their own Hearts Lusts, and let them follow  
their own Imaginations*: And with the same  
People in our Saviour's Time, Matt. xxiii.  
37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that  
killest the Prophets, and stonest them which  
are*

Serm.  
VII.



Serm. are sent unto thee ! How often would I have  
 VII. gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen  
 gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and  
 ye would not ! Behold, your House is left un-  
 to you desolate.

It cannot be doubted but your Thoughts have already all along prevented me, in applying what has been said unto ourselves ; for whose Admonition these Things are written, and they were intended for Examples unto us, upon whom the Ends of the World are come. There is no Nation upon Earth, that has had greater Experience of the divine Goodness, than we have had. We have long enjoyed the inestimable Blessing of a free and legal Government, while other Nations have groaned under the Violence of arbitrary Oppressions. We have had the free Use of our Reason and of the Holy Scriptures allowed us, which under other Governments, that yet call themselves Christian, have, for many Ages together, been persecuted even unto Death. We have enjoyed all the Plenty and Happiness of Peace, even in the midst of the most vigorous and bloody Wars : While the Sword and Fire have consumed round about us, and other fruitful Countries have been ravaged and destroyed : While thousands have fallen beside us, and ten thousands at our right Hand,  
 and

and yet Providence has protected us, that it came not nigh us : While Want and Famine spread Desolation among our Neighbours, and Pestilence at a Distance threatned still severer Judgments of God.

What *Returns* we have made to the divine Goodness for these *Lengthenings of our Tranquillity*, appears too sadly in that Impiety and Profaneness, that Looseness and Debauchery, that Iniquity and Uncharitableness, that unrighteous and irreligious Spirit of Heat, Violence and Factiousness, which still abounds amongst us. For these Things God has at several Times visited this Nation, with some sharp Remembrances of his Displeasure, and has at other Times threatned us with very near Approaches, of a more lasting and destructive Wrath. The Sword of his destroying Angel, is at this Day unsheathed before us; and how far his Commission may extend, God only knows. The *only certain* Way of deprecating God's Wrath effectually, is to bring forth beforehand those Fruits meet for Repentance, to which all the divine Judgments that are not finally destructive, are intended to excite us. The *first* Thing is, that every *private* Person would for himself seriously examine, and amend (as *Solomon* expresses it, in that solemn Prayer of his,

1 Kings

Serm.  
VII.

Serm. I *Kings viii. 38.*) every Man the Plague of  
 VII. *his own Heart*; that is, reform his *private*  
 and *personal Faults*, whatever they be.  
 In the next Place, with Regard to the  
*Publick*: Since God has been pleased to  
 continue to us the Knowledge of the *Gos-*  
*pel*, in a more *free* and *unrestrained* Use  
 of the *Scriptures* than most other Nations  
 injoy; it behoves us, (lest we provoke  
 God to *remove our Candlestick* out of its  
 Place,) to take due and constant Care that  
 we bring every Thing impartially to the  
 Test of that sacred Rule; and that in our  
 Practice we continually so behave ourselves  
 as becomes those who have always before  
 their Eyes the uncorrupted Doctrine and  
 Precepts of Christ. And since in the  
*Civil Government* likewise, it has hitherto  
 pleased God, by many even miraculous  
 Events, to continue to us our Laws and  
 Liberties; it imports us, (as we would  
 not draw down upon our Heads, that  
 greatest of all the temporal Plagues of  
 God, *arbitrary Power*) it imports us,  
 every Man in his Station, to the utmost  
 of his Ability, to support and maintain  
 a Government so constituted. That the  
*People*, under the uniform and steady  
 Protection of wise and equitable Laws,  
 may serve God quietly and with religious  
 Fear. And that the *King* may *rejoice in*  
*thy Strength*, O Lord, and be exceeding  
 glad

*glad of thy Salvation : That thou mayest give him his Heart's Desire, and not deny him the Request of his Lips : That thou mayest prevent him with the Blessings of Goodness, and make his Honour great in thy Salvation, and crown him with Glory and great Worship : That thou may'st give him a long Life here, and a longer and happier hereafter, even for ever and ever.*

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VII.



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SERMON

Preach'd in the

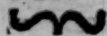
Parish-Church of St. James's  
Westminster, Decemb. 8, 1721.  
being the Day of Fasting and  
Humiliation, for beseeching God  
to preserve us from the Plague.

LUKE xiii. 2, 3.

*And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were Sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such Things? I tell you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

**T**IS the natural Voice and Judgment of Reason, in which all Men who have any Sense of God upon their Mind, in all Nations and in all Ages, have agreed; that the Miseries and Calamities which befall Mankind, are all of them the *Effects* and *Consequences* of Sin.

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VIII.

*Sin.* Considering the essential Goodness of God, who cannot take Pleasure in the needless Afflictions of his Creatures; this Notion, in *general*, cannot but be right. And were there no other State but this; were this World the whole of God's Creation, and took in the whole Period of our Being; it could not but be moreover true in *particular*, that the *Proportion* of Misery which befalls every single Person, would be exactly correspondent to his Crimes. But *here*, there comes in a very great Variety of *different* Considerations. The present State being a Time of *Tryal*, and not of *Retribution*; there hence arise many wise Reasons, why God sometimes permits the greatest of Afflictions to fall upon the best of Men, and sometimes suffers the wickedest of Men to go on in an uninterrupted Course of Prosperity; and, in the Execution of temporal Judgments, very frequently involves the Righteous in the same Calamities which he sends upon the Ungodly. The only Use therefore that can be made, and which Providence intends should be made, of the divine Judgments here upon Earth; is to convince us of the Evil of Sin in general, to awaken us from a careless and inconsiderate Temper, to wean us from too great a Fondness for the uncertain Injoyments of this present Life; and to put

us

us continually upon mending *our own* Manners, and improving *ourselves* more and more in the Practice of Virtue, and not at all to enable us to judge concerning *others*, before the great Day of Account, what their State and Condition is, with Regard to the final Favour or Displeasure of God. This is a Matter of Curiosity, which concerns not *us* to know; and every Judgment we attempt to make concerning it, has, in the present State of Things, even a proper and natural Tendency to deceive us. Every *private* Person, in this Way of judging, whenever he compares himself with others, 'tis odds but, according as his natural Temper be, whether Melancholy, or Presumptuous, he determines either *uncharitably* of others, or with unreasonable *Despondency* of himself; from Dispensations of Providence, which neither to *him* nor *them* are at all the proper Rule of judging in that Matter. But *publick* Bodies of Men, Nations, Sects, or Parties, whenever *they* take upon them to judge of each other in this Method, they hardly ever fail to err on the *presumptuous* Side; and to turn every Judgment of God, which falls upon Men of *other* Denominations, into an Argument of Pride and Favour towards *themselves*. This is what our Saviour, in



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VIII.

the Text, warns us against, *Suppose ye, says he, that those Galilæans, who fell by Pilate's Cruelty in so extraordinary a manner, as that their own Blood was mingled with the Blood of their Sacrifices; suppose ye that these Men were Sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such Things? I tell you, nay, but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* The Persons who told our Lord of this extraordinary Calamity, ver. 1. seem to have done it with an Expectation of Curiosity, to see what Observations our Lord would make concerning the Behaviour and Circumstances and State of those Men towards God, upon whom this particular Misfortune fell. But he in *this*, according to his constant Method in all *other* Cases, disappointed their unprofitable Inquisitiveness; and, instead of satisfying them about *other* Mens Affairs, turns their Question into an Occasion of making some useful Application to *themselves*: *I tell you, says he, except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.*

In discoursing upon which Words, it may be useful for us to observe: 1<sup>st</sup>. Our Saviour's *general* Manner; that, whenever Men proposed to him any curious Question, or related to him any particular Fact or Event, in Expectation of hearing

ing his Observations upon it; he constantly turned the Matter before him, into an Occasion of giving some *practical* Instruction, to the Persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing. And *2dly*. The *particular* Doctrine contained in these Words: That, though all God's temporal Judgments are inflicted upon Account of Sin, yet they are not proportionable to the Degrees of Mens Demerits; and that therefore the proper Use to be made of them, is, never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning *others*, but to infer *for ourselves* the Necessity of Repentance.

*1st*. Nothing is more remarkable in the whole History of the Gospel, than our Saviour's *general* Method: That, whenever Men proposed to him any curious Question, or related to him any particular Fact or Event, in Expectation of hearing his Observations upon it; he constantly turned the Matter before him, into an Occasion of giving some *practical* Instruction, to the Persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing. He passes no Judgment upon those unhappy *Galileans*, whose extraordinary Misfortune was now reported to him. He makes no Observation upon the Characters of the Persons, nor gives any Hint of the peculiar Rea-

Serm. sons for which Providence thus distin.  
 VIII. guished them from the Bulk of Sinners  
 But (what was of much more Use to the  
 Persons who made the Enquiry, and to  
 all Christians in general, for whose In-  
 struction our Lord's Reply is recorded in  
 the Gospel;) he hence takes Occasion to  
 inculcate upon *all* Sinners, the Necessity  
 of Repentance and Amendment of Life,  
 in order to escape God's final Wrath.  
 And this was his constant Method, upon  
 all *other* Occasions. When one asked him  
*ver. 23. of this Chapter, Lord, are there*  
*Few that be saved?* instead of satisfying  
 the Person's Curiosity, he exhorts both  
 him that asks the Question, and as many  
 others as were present, to take Care that  
*they themselves* be found in the Number,  
*whatever that Number be. Strive ye to en-*  
*ter in at the strait Gate; for many, I say un-*  
*to you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be*  
*able. When once the Master of the House is*  
*rise up, and hath shut to the Door, and ye*  
*begin to stand without, and to say, Lord—*  
*we have eaten and drunk in thy Presence, and*  
*thou hast taught in our Streets; he shall say,*  
*I tell you, I know you not whence you are;*  
*depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity.*  
 Again: When his Disciples asked him,  
*Mat. xviii. 1. Who is the greatest in the King-*  
*dom of Heaven?* Instead of naming, accord-  
 ing

ing to their Expectation, some among Serm. themselves, who had conversed with him VIII. most intimately here upon Earth; (which Expectation showed forth itself particularly in the Request of the Mother of Zebedee's Children, that *one of her Sons* might sit on his right Hand, and the other on his left in his Kingdom :) Instead of this, I say, he tells them *which* was the only Way whereby they could attain to the Kingdom of Heaven at all. Setting a little Child in the midst of them, he said, *Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.* In like manner, when the Disciples asked him, *Matt. xxiv. 3. When shall these Things be? And what shall be the Sign of thy coming, and of the End of the World?* the Sum of his Answer is: *Watch ye, and be ye ready; for in such an Hour as you think not, the ver. 42, 44. Son of Man cometh. And, take heed to yourselves, lest at any Time your Hearts be over- Luke xiii. charged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness and 44. Cares of this Life; and so that Day come upon you unawares. For as a Snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the Face of the whole Earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be account-*



Serm. ed worthy to escape all these Things, and to  
 VIII. stand before the Son of Man. And the same

Turn that he thus always gave to curious Questions put to him, the same he likewise constantly gave to *incidental Things* said to him, or to particular *Facts and Events* taken Notice of in his Presence. When one prefaced a Question he was about to propose to him, with that respectful Title and Mark of Esteem, *good Master*, he thence takes Occasion, even from so seemingly *small* a Handle, to instruct the Person in that great and prime Foundation of all Religion, that *God and God only*, is perfectly and essentially good. *Why callest thou me, good? There is none good, but one; that is, God.* Again, when *Martha* cumbered with much serving, complained to him, Lord, dost thou not care that my Sister hath left me to serve alone? instead of speaking to her Sister to come and help her, he takes a gentle Occasion from her own Complaint, to remind her of a more important Piece of Service: *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many Things; but one Thing is needful; and Mary has chosen that good Part, which shall not be taken from her.* At another Time, when one of the Company he was discoursing to, desired him to speak to his Brother to divide the Inheritance with him; instead of making himself a Judge

Mat. xix.  
17.

Luke x.  
40, 42.

*Judge and Divider* between them, he chose Serm. VIII.  
 rather to take that Occasion to preach to Luke xii.  
 them all against Covetousness: *Take heed*  
*and beware of Covetousness; for a Man's Life* 15.  
*consisteth not in the Abundance of the Things*  
*which he possesses.* In another Place, when  
 a Person in the Company to whom he was  
 preaching, astonished at the Excellency  
 of his Doctrine, cried out, *Blessed is the*  
*Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which*  
*thou hast sucked,* Luke xi. 27. immediately  
 he turns their Thoughts from the Admi-  
 ration of himself, to that which would  
 most effectually be profitable to them :  
*Yea rather, says he, Blessed are they that*  
*hear the Word of God, and keep it.* Upon  
 another Occasion, when his Disciples  
*prayed him to eat,* John iv. 31. He lets not  
 even that Opportunity slip, of reminding  
 them how, to a rational and well-disposed  
 Mind, there is no Pleasure so great, as  
 that of doing what is right: *I have meat,*  
*says he, to eat, that ye know not of; —*  
*My meat is to do the Will of him that sent*  
*me, and to finish his Work.* 'Twould be  
 repeating the whole Gospel, the whole Hi-  
 story of our Saviour's Life, to mention  
 all the Instances of his turning every In-  
 cident that came before him, into Matter  
 of Instruction and Admonition to those  
 with whom he conversed. When some

Serm. of the Pharisees advised him to *retire out*  
 VIII. of the Reach of *Herod*, who, they infor-  
 med him, had a Design to *kill* him, *Luke*  
 xiii. 31. Instead of being drawn, as prob-  
 ably *they* expected, by that seeming  
 friendly and officious Advice, to enter  
 with them into the *Character* of *Herod* and  
 his Government; he, in a very *extraordi-*  
*nary* and yet most *natural* Manner turns  
 his Answer into a *severe Reproof* of *their*  
*own* Incurribleness, and into an Occa-  
 sion of giving them *Warning*, how near  
 the *final Wrath* of God was *impending* upon  
 them: *It cannot be*, says he, *that a Prophet*  
*perish out of Jerusalem*: O Jerusalem, Je-  
 rusalem, *which killest the Prophets, and ston-*  
*est them that are sent unto thee*; how often  
*would I have gathered thy Children together,*  
*as a Hen doth gather her Brood under her*  
*Wings, and ye would not!* Behold, your  
*House is left unto you desolate*. In like man-  
 ner, when his Disciples, as they were  
 going out of the Temple, observed to  
 him; *Master, see what manner of Stones, and*  
*what Buildings are here*, Mark xiii. 1. In-  
 stead of adding, as they seemed to ex-  
 pect, *his own Observations* concerning the  
*Sumptuousness* and *Magnificence* of the Bul-  
 ding, and the *Grandeur* and *Riches* of the  
 Builder; he on the contrary turns their  
 Thoughts from *these Considerations*, to  
 the

the view of that *final Destruction* which God intended to bring upon the whole Nation, for their continued Perverseness and Disobedience; *Seest thou* (says he to the Person who desired him to take Notice of the Stateliness of the Fabrick; *Seest thou*) *these great Buildings? There shall not be left one Stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* And thus likewise, in the Words of the Text: *When some that were present, told him of the Galilæans, whose Blood Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices; he did not, (as they, who mentioned this Matter to him, seemed to expect; he did not) hereupon enter into a Discourse concerning either the Cruelty of Pilate who murdered these Galileans, or his Impiety and Profaneness in murdering them at the Place and Time of God's publick Worship, or concerning the Unhappiness of the Persons themselves who perished by so particular a Misfortune, or concerning the peculiar Reasons why the divine Providence thought fit to distinguish these particular Persons by a singular Judgment: But, instead of all this, he immediately makes the Application to his Auditors then present, and to the Persons themselves who told him of the Fact; warning them of the indispensable Necessity of effectual Repentance and Amendment of Life as the only*

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only possible Means by which *they themselves* could escape God's final Vengeance. Suppose ye (says he) that these Galilæans were Sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such Things? I tell you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or these eighteen, upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

2dly. Having thus at large set forth to you our Saviour's general Method; that whenever Men proposed to him any curious Question, or related to him any particular Fact or Event, in Expectation of hearing his Observations upon it; he constantly turned the Matter before him, into an Occasion of giving some practical Instruction, to the Persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing: It remains now in the second Place, that I proceed to consider the *particular* Doctrine, expressed in the Words of the Text; that, though all God's temporal Judgments are inflicted upon account of Sin, yet they are not proportionable to the Degrees of Mens Demerits; and that, therefore, the proper Use to be made of them, is never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning *others*, but to infer

for ourselves the Necessity of Repentance. Sermon.  
That all the temporal Judgments God at VIII.  
any Time inflicts upon Mankind, are on  
the account of Sin, cannot indeed possibly be denied; because 'tis on the account of Sin, that Men are at all placed in this State of *Misery* and *Mortality*. Had *Sin* never entered into the World, Man had never been excluded out of *Paradise*, and from the *Tree of Life*; which was, either literally or figuratively, a Means or an Emblem of Immortality and Happiness. And at last, when *Transgression* shall be finished, and an End made of *Sin*; the *Fruit* of the *Tree of Life* (as the Prophetic Language expresses it) shall be again restored, and the *Leaves of the Tree* shall be for the *Healing of the Nations*. To *Sin* therefore in general, 'tis evident, all the Miseries of this mortal State are wholly owing. Nevertheless, since this present State is not a State of *Retribution* in particular, but only such a State of *Tryal* or *Probation*, as God, in Consequence of *Sin's* entering into the World, thought fit to appoint Men to undergo; a State, in which the Righteous and the Wicked, without a perpetual miraculous Interposition, cannot but be frequently involved in the same Calamities together; a State, in which the best and most innocent Persons very often suffer, even the most grievously,

Serm. *voulsly*, by and from the Wicked; a State,  
 VIII. wherein God himself sometimes thinks  
 fit, by Afflictions of his own more immediate appointing, (by Winds and Storms, by Floods and general Devastations, by Famines, Pestilences, and the like universal Calamities, which fall upon all promiscuously,) to try the Faith and Patience and Resignation of his Servants; and in which State we can never judge with any Certainty, whether even those who are the most suddenly cut off, are cut off in Judgment or in Mercy: For these Reasons, whenever we see any extraordinary Calamity befall any particular *Person*, or any Body of Men, or any one *Nation* in particular; we ought never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning the State of *others* with Regard to God, but only to infer for *ourselves* the Necessity of Repentance. 'Tis a very natural Piece of Pride, in careless and corrupt Minds, to build an Opinion of their *own* Goodness, upon the *comparative* Badness of *others*, and, in judging of this *comparative* Badness of *others*, to deceive themselves, by founding that Judgment either upon *what others suffer* at the Hand of God, or perhaps upon *what Faults others are guilty of* in one particular Manner, when possibly *they themselves* are in some other Manner guilty of the very same  
 Of.

Offences. Thus for Instance, Christians of the *reformed Religion* condemn, and very justly, those of the *Church of Rome*, as guilty of the highest Absurdity and Irreligion, who in a continual Circle look upon themselves as absolved from their Sins, which they confess to a *Priest*, and then return to their Sins again: And yet among *Protestants* every one is really guilty of the very same Absurdity and Irreligion, who in a continual Circle looks upon himself as absolved from his Sins, which he confesses to God Almighty, and then returns to them again. Thus Men are very apt to deceive themselves, in comparing *other Men's Actions* with their *own*. And so they are apt to do also, in comparing their *Sufferings*. A false and deceitful Heart, (especially in Cases where *Bodies* of Men, where *Nations*, or *Setts*, or *Parties* are concerned,) is very ready to flatter itself with Imaginations of being *itself more in Favour* with God, when the severer Sorts of the *divine Judgments* inflicted upon others, fill it with uncharitable Suspicions of the *Grounds and Reasons* of those Judgments. In some few particular Cases indeed, where the *Judgment* is the immediate *Consequence* and direct *Effect* of the Sin; as, where the *Diseases* are the immediate *Produce* of the *Debauchery*; or where either *single Persons* or *whole Nations* do themselves

Serm.

VHL



Serm. *selves greatly suffer, in the very Attempt of*  
 VIII. *despoiling others of their manifest Right :*

*W*

In these Cases there is indeed no Uncharitableness, in ascribing the Judgment to the Sin. But much oftner, and indeed generally speaking, it arises wholly from Mens Partiality towards themselves, that they are so ready to throw upon others the Causes of the Judgments wherewith God punishes Mankind. Thus of old in the Heathen Roman Empire, whenever God was pleased to send among them Plagues or Famines, or Devastations by the Incursion of Barbarous Nations; the Christians immediately, as if they were the Causes of the Calamity, were hurried to the Prisons, to the Racks, and to the wild Beasts. 'Tis not easy for Men to see it in themselves: But something of the same Spirit there is in every wicked Man, when, instead of being moved by the Judgments of God to examine and amend his own Heart, his Eyes are continually searching after the real or imaginary Faults of others. *Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth.* But if we would observe our Saviour's Direction in the Text, and form our Notions of Things according to that Rule; herein we could never be deceived. The Judgments of God, which we see abroad in the World, are a proper  
 and

and continual Warning to all Sinners, to bring them to Repentance and effectual Amendment: Without which, they must all finally and inevitably perish. The Jews, to whom our Saviour gave the Admonition in the Text, did, at the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, perish in great Multitudes literally by the very same Calamity, which had before fallen upon the *Galileans* here mentioned. And all Sinners in all Ages, who see the Judgments of God fall upon others, ought to consider, that they know not how soon the very same Calamities may fall upon themselves. But whether the Punishment overtakes them at all here, or no; it will, without timely and effectual Amendment, certainly overtake them hereafter. Which is a much more terrible Consideration: For if *these Things are done in the green Tree, what shall be done in the dry?* If Judgment begin at the House of God, what shall the End be of them that obey not the Gospel? If the temporal Calamities which fall upon mixt Multitudes here, of the Righteous and Wicked together, be so dreadful; what shall the Estate be of those, who shall be punished with EVER-LASTING Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Majesty?

A SER-

and universal Warning to all Sinners, to bring them to Repentance and effectual Amendment: Without which, they must all finally and inevitably perish. The Lord to whom our Saviour gave the Abomination in the Text, did, at the Destruction of Jerusalem, perish in great Multitudes exactly by the very same Calamity, which had before fallen upon the Galileans here mentioned. And all Sinners in all Ages, who see the Judgment of God fall upon others, ought to consider that they know not how soon the very same Calamities may fall upon themselves. But whether the Punishment overtakes them as all here, or no; it will, without timely and effectual Amendment, certainly overtake them hereafter. Which is a much more terrible Consideration: For if these Things are done in the next Year, what shall be done in the day? If Judgment begin at the House of God, what shall the End be of them that obey not the Gospel? If the temporal Calamities which fall upon mixed Multitudes here, of the Righteous and Wicked together, be so dreadful; what shall the Estate be of those who shall be punished with Eternal Fire? Let us therefore draw near to the Lord, and from the Glory of his Majesty.

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A  
SERMON

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St. James's  
Westminster, April 25, 1723.  
being the Day appointed by  
His Majesty for a publick  
*Thanksgiving* to God for pre-  
serving His Majesty and His  
Subjects from that dreadful  
*Plague* with which the King-  
dom of *France* was lately vi-  
sited; and for putting an End  
to the same.

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MAT T. XXIV, 7.

*For Nation shall rise against Nation, and  
Kingdom against Kingdom: And there shall  
be Famines, and Pestilences, and Earth-  
quakes in divers Places.*

THESE Words are Part of the Serm.  
IX.  
prophetical Description, which  
our Saviour gives his Disciples a  
little before his Death, of the State of  
O Things



Serm. Things which should be between that

IX. Time and the final Destruction of the Jewish Temple and Nation; and, under that Type, the State of the World in general during the larger Period, until his coming to Judgment. The principal Thing, about which he most distinctly and particularly admonishes them, is the Persecutions and Difficulties they and their Followers must expect to meet with, more or less, in all Ages. *They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all Nations for my Name's sake: And many shall be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another: And because Iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold: That is, the general Corruption and Wickedness of the World, shall discourage many, and weary them out, and make them lay aside all Thoughts of Religion, and give themselves up to be carried with the Stream of an unrighteous and debauched World. For there shall be great Tribulation, such as was not since the Beginning of the World unto this Time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those Days should be shortened, there should no Flesh be saved: (That is, the Truth of Religion, if this State of Things were long to continue, would be totally extinguished among Men, by the Universality of prevailing*

vailing Corruptions :) *But for the Elects* Sermon.  
*sake, those Days shall be shortened.* This (I IX.  
 say) is the *principal* particular, upon which  
 our Lord here chiefly enlarges: That, in  
 after Ages, Men might not be surprized,  
 when they should find that the *Prince of*  
*Peace* came not to send Peace upon Earth, but  
 a *Sword*; and that the Religion of Christ,  
 a Religion of the most perfect Simplicity  
 and Plainness, of the compleatest and  
 most extensive Charity, should be over-  
 run with universal Confusions and Ini-  
 quity. But besides this *principal* and more  
*especial* Aim of his Discourse, he inter-  
 mixes moreover some general *Intimations*  
 of other Events which should happen in  
 the World; and particularly of the *Judg-*  
*ments*, wherewith the divine Providence  
 would from Time to Time punish the  
 unrighteous Nations of the Earth. *Ye shall*  
*hear* (says he) of *Wars*, and *Rumours of*  
*Wars*: See that ye be not troubled: For all  
 these things must come to pass: — For Na-  
 tion shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom  
 against Kingdom; and there shall be *Famine*,  
 and *Pestilences*, and *Earthquakes* in divers  
*Places*: All these are the Beginning of Sor-  
 rows.

With Regard to each of these particu-  
 lars, viz. the *Persecutions* wherewith good  
 Men should be oppressed by an *unrighteous*

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*World*, and the Judgments wherewith the divine Providence should at any Time punish the Nations of the Earth; the Advice our Lord gives his Disciples, is, to *PRAY* constantly to God, that he would be pleas'd either to prevent these Things coming upon them, or lighten the Burden of them by providential Supports. *Pray ye, says he, that your Flight be not in the Winter, neither on the Sabbath-day. And, watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these Things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.* Now the same Reason that there is, why we ought at any time to *PRAY*, that God would either prevent or remove from us any Calamity; the very same Reason there is, to return him our *THANKS* and *PRAISE*, whenever he has been pleas'd either to withdraw from us any such Calamity, or the apparent Danger of it. The Ground of both is the same; that God, who has Power over all, is the alone Disposer of all Events; and that that Disposition of Mind, which leads Men to apply to him for all the good Things they want, and to make Acknowledgment to him for all the Benefits they have received, is one of the principal of those Qualifications which recommend Men to the divine Fa-  
your,

your, and to the more immediate Care and Protection of his good Providence. Serm. IX.

The Meaning of which is, that not even the *best of Men* can have any certain Security that they shall escape the Calamities of this present Life; nay, in some Cases, as in that of Persecution particularly, they are *for that very Reason* the *most* exposed, because they are the *best Men*: But the Meaning is, that God who *created* the *material* World for the Sake of the *moral* One, and governs the former always with a view to the latter; (for the unintelligent material World, how exquisite soever the Fabrick of it be, is nothing at all any otherwise, than as it has Relation to intelligent and rational Beings that inhabit it: God, I say, who created the material World merely for the Sake of the moral one, and governs the former always with a View to the latter, will certainly make all Things (sooner or later) *work together for good to them that love him*, Rom. viii. 28. Even the *severest Judgments* that he ever sends upon the World, and which *to incorrigible Sinners* are the Messengers of Destruction; even these, to well-disposed Minds, are either at a Distance Warnings and Admonitions to amend: Or they are Chastisements inflicted for their Correction; which, tho' at present they cannot but be grievous,



Serm. yet afterwards they yield the peactable Fruit  
 IX. of Righteousness unto them which are exercis-  
 ed thereby: Or they are Trials of Mens Faith  
 and Patience; which being much more preci-  
 ous than of Gold that perishes, though it be  
 tried with Fire, will be found unto Praise  
 and Honour and Glory at the appearing of Je-  
 sus Christ: Or, sometimes, they are Means  
 of taking away the Righteous from greater  
 Evils to come; so that though they seem to  
 be punished for a little while, yet is their Hope  
 full of Immortality: Or, however it be, still  
 (as the Apostle expresses it) the Lord know-  
 eth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptati-  
 ons, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of  
 Judgment to be punished: And the Righte-  
 ous have always this Security, that God is  
 Faithful, who will not suffer them to be temp-  
 ted above that they are able; but will with  
 the Temptation also make a Way to escape,  
 that they may be able to bear it. Never-  
 theless, since God only knows the Events of  
 Things, and no Man can be sure of his own  
 Strength; therefore Reason teaches, and  
 our Lord expressly directs us, to Pray, that  
 we may not be led into Temptation. And for  
 the same Reason, 'tis our Duty to be thank-  
 ful whenever Providence has prevented any  
 Temptation from coming upon us. And  
 the Case is the same, with Regard to  
 every Sort of Affliction or Calamity in Life.  
 God

God is able, and will certainly cause all these Things to work together for good, to those who are truly and sincerely Religious. Yet, sensible of our own Unworthiness, and knowing that these Things are also sometimes Messengers of Wrath, and Instruments of Destruction; 'tis therefore our Duty to pray continually for the Averting of them, and to return Thanks for every Escape of Danger from them, and to be always ready to make a religious Use either of their being inflicted or prevented. See that ye be not troubled, says our Lord; for all these Things MUST come to pass:—For Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and there shall be Famines, and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers Places.

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IX.

The Particulars of this Prophecy of our Lord, we have seen literally and remarkably fulfilled in our own Days: And yet God has been graciously pleased, not to suffer any one of these Calamities to come nigh our Dwellings. We have seen Nation rise up against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom: We have seen Fire and Sword consume round about us, and many fruitful Countries ravaged and destroyed; yet at the same Time, we have sat every Man under his Vine and under his Fig-Tree; injoying all the Blessings and

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IX.

W

Happiness of Peace, even in the midst of the most bloody and destructive Wars. We have seen *Want* and *Famine* spread Desolation over different Countries, whilst we have been even luxurious in the abundance of overflowing *Plenty*. We have known populous and flourishing Towns, overthrown in one Day with a Storm and *Earthquake*; while our Habitation has been, as the Scripture speaks, the *Munition of Rocks*: So that the Psalmist's Ground of Praise, (Ps. cxxv. 2. *As the Hills stand about Jerusalem, even so standeth the Lord round about his People*) may very properly be applied to *Us*: As the *Seas encompass our Land*, may we no less justly say, even so has the Protection of *Providence* surrounded us on *every side*. Lastly, (which is the more immediate and particular Occasion of our meeting together at *this Time* to return Thanks to God;) we have seen *that destroying Angel*, the *Pestilence*, executing in particular Places the unsearchable Judgments of God; but holding forth to *Us* this Terror, at a remote Distance only; to admonish and warn us, (not to imagine that those particular Persons, upon whom this divine Judgment fell, were Sinners above all Men that dwelt on the Earth; but that we might take Notice,) that, unless we repent, we shall all likewise perish.

This

This is the proper End and Design of *all* God's *temporal* Judgments; to warn Men to amend: And the only valuable Expression of *Thankfulness*, for his having at any Time *averted* from us impending Dangers; is our being thereby led to a more careful Obedience. There is no where in the whole New Testament a severer Character given of incorrigible Sinners, than in those Passages where they are described as not only over-looking all the general Works of Nature and Providence, but as continuing moreover unmoved even at the most exemplary Expressions of the divine *Wrath*, and unthankfully insensible even of the most remarkable Deliverances. *Rev. ix. 20. xvi. 9. The rest of the Men which were not killed by these Plagues, yet repented not of the Works of their Hands; but blasphemed the Name of God which has Power over these Plagues, and repented not to give him Glory.* To give Glory to God, is, to make publick Acknowledgment of our Sense of God's continually governing the World in Wisdom and Righteousness; to profess our constant Dependance upon him, for all the good Things we hope for in the Course of Nature which he has appointed, and under the Direction of his alwise Providence; to return him Thanks for all the Benefits we at any Time receive, and  
for

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Serm. for every Escape or Deliverance vouch-  
 IX. safed us from impending Dangers ; and  
 to testify the Sincerity of these Acknow-  
 ledgments, by our Obedience to him in  
 the Course of a virtuous and religious  
 Life ; that others likewise, *seeing our good  
 Works, may glorify our Father which is in  
 Heaven, and promote his Kingdom, which  
 is the Practice of Virtue and Righteousness  
 in the World.*

The Things, for which it is our Duty  
 always to return Thanks to God, are, in  
 general, every good Thing we enjoy :  
*Life, Health, Peace, Plenty, Liberty, and  
 every Blessing whatsoever, in which consists  
 either the Happiness of the present World,  
 or the Opportunities of laying a Founda-  
 tion for that which is to come.* But as these  
 Blessings never appear so valuable, when  
 by a long uninterrupted Injoyment we  
 are accustomed to esteem them only the  
*common* Effects of the Course of Nature ;  
 as when at any Time, either by the ac-  
 tual *Want* of them, or by very *apparent  
 Danger of losing* them, we are led to a ju-  
 stter and more considerate Estimation of  
 Things, and with a more attentive View  
 to behold the Hand from whence they  
 all proceed ; hence it is, that either after  
 a Deliverance from the Weight of any  
 severe Judgment, or after any remarkable  
*Escape*

*Escape* from the Terror of impending Serm. Danger, we seem to be in a more particular manner called unto *Thankfulness*; IX. though in Reality the same Acknowledgment is no less justly due, for the constant and uniform Protection of Providence. The Blessing of *Peace*, generally is justly esteemed and valued by those only, who have felt the Misery and Calamities of *War*: And yet without Question, 'tis a greater Blessing to have been always preserved from those Calamities. The inestimable Benefit of *Liberty*, hardly ever meets with any just Returns of *Thankfulness*, but from such as have lately groaned under the cruel Bondage of *Tyranny* and *Oppression*; and yet, without all Controversy, in the true Estimation of Things, a greater *Acknowledgment* is due from those who have continually enjoyed that uninterrupted Protection. The Blessing of *Health* itself, that necessary Foundation of all other Injoyments whatsoever, very rarely meets with any just Sense of its real and intrinsick Value, except in those who have long been afflicted with the *Want* of it; and yet, without Dispute, the continual *Preservation* of it, is a greater Blessing than the most unexpected *Recovery*. In like manner, in the Instance of the particular Occasion upon which we are assembled at this Time: Had it pleased God,

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God, that the devouring Pestilence had nearly approached our Dwellings; had it swept away our dearest Relations, or our most valuable Friends; or if even amongst those only, for whom we had no further Concern than what arises from the general Ties of Humanity and the natural Sympathies of Neighbourhood, we had seen *Thousands fall beside us, and ten thousands at our right Hand*: Who is there, that does not feel within himself with what a profound Sense of the divine Goodness, the Survivors would have expressed their Thankfulness for the Mercy of their own Deliverance. And yet, in Reality, how insensible soever many of us may be of the real Value of the Blessing, a greater Blessing it is (unless our own Unthankfulness makes it to us cease in Event to be so; a greater Blessing, I say, it is,) to have had so severe a Judgment prevented from approaching us at all. For this Instance therefore of the divine Mercy towards us, it becomes us to return in a particular Manner our most solemn Thanks. And this Expression of our Duty, will then be acceptable in the Sight of God; if it leaves upon our Minds a lasting Impression, that, *except we repent, we shall still all perish*. If the Thankfulness of our Mouths, be not accompanied with the real Sense of our Hearts, and a suitable  
con-

consequent Obedience in our Lives and Practice ; God can still at any Time commission his destroying Angel, to smite us in a Moment. Or, if we continue to provoke him, he can inflict Judgments upon us much more severe than the most devouring Pestilence ; by delivering us into the Hands of *MEN*, whose *Mercies are cruel*. He can deliver us up into the lasting *Tyranny* of the spiritual *Babylon*, in whom for many successive Ages has not only been found *the Blood of Prophets and of Saints and of all that were slain upon the Earth* ; but by whose *RELIGIOUS Sorceries* also, have all *Nations* been deceived : And whose Cruelty has not been more destructive to the *Lives* of Men, than pernicious to their *Souls* also, by taking away *the Key of Knowledge*, and establishing a *blind implicit Ignorance*, utterly subversive of the very Foundations of all *rational regard* to God, and of all *Truth, Justice, and Righteousness* towards Men. *Hitherto* it has pleased God, to preserve us from this Calamity also ; from this severest of all the divine Judgments ; and which, of all others, has the most nearly and most continually threatned us. For this Preservation therefore, ought we likewise continually to return our most *solemn Thanks* to the divine Majesty. And 'tis the more  
rea-



Serm. *reasonable* so to do, because the Calamity

IX. I am now speaking of, is *that very Tribulation*, in Comparison of which our Saviour tells us, that all the Things mention'd by him in the Text, *Nations rising against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and Famines, and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers Places; all these, says he) are but the BEGINNING of Sorrows.*

The Manner, in which alone we can acceptably return Thanks to God for all his Mercies bestowed upon us, and for averting these and all other his Judgments, whether they be such as are more immediately of his own inflicting, or whether they be such as are brought upon Men by the Wickedness and Perverseness of others: The only Manner, I say, in which we can acceptably return Thanks to the Almighty for any Blessing, is by having our Minds so influenced with a real and lasting Sense of the Goodness and Mercy of God in his Government of the World, as that we be thereby led effectually to obey his Will in the Course of a virtuous and religious Life, bringing forth Fruits meet for the Acknowledgments we profess to make to him. By this, and this only, can our Praises be rendered an acceptable Sacrifice; *Pf. xxxi. 1. Rejoice in the*

*the Lord ye RIGHTEOUS, for it becometh well the JUST to be thankful. But of the Wicked it may truly be affirmed, that, as their Prayer, so their Praise also is an Abomination to the Lord.*

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But more particularly : If we will be-  
have ourselves worthily, as those who  
have, really, a thankful Sense of the di-  
vine Goodness in averting the Judgments  
which have sometimes threatned us ; we  
must, in the

1<sup>st</sup> Place, as *Believers* in God, seriously  
and sincerely make use of our Reason, in  
banishing from among us that *atheistical*  
*Spirit* prevailing among some Men, who,  
whenever things are seen to proceed from  
*natural* Causes, immediately thereupon  
they endeavour to exclude all Considera-  
tion of God. As if the abstract Word  
*Nature*, was a real intelligent Agent ; or  
meant any thing more, than the usual and  
ordinary Method of God's governing the  
World. Which foolish Mistake arises  
merely, from Mens not distinguishing the  
*NECESSARY* Nature of Things, from  
that *APPOINTED* Course or Order of Na-  
ture, which is nothing but the Will of  
God and the Law of his Creation. For  
Instance: That *two and two should make*  
*four*, or that *a Body should be only in one*  
*Place*

Serm. *Place at once*, is the **NECESSARY** Nature of Things, and could not have been otherwise. But when we say, 'tis the Nature of Corn to grow; or, 'tis the Nature of pestilential Vapours to destroy: In these and the like Expressions, Nature is nothing but the voluntary Appointment of God: And natural Causes here, do really no more exclude the Consideration of God, than any one's affirming that 'tis the Nature of a Sword to kill, would be a reasonable and satisfactory Ground to forbear any further Inquiry by what Hand that Instrument of Death was moved. When the Inquiry is concerning the efficient Agency, by what Power Plants and Animals are formed, by what Power Corn grows, or Food nourishes, and the like: To answer in this Case, that 'tis *their* NATURE, or that 'tis natural for them so to do; 'tis exactly the same thing as if a Man being asked how and by what Architect a Palace was built, should answer, it was the Nature of it to be built of such a Form and Bigness.

2dly. As *Christians*; 'tis our Duty, not only in general to attend to the Hand of God in all the Dispensations of Providence, but moreover to observe distinctly how all the great Events that happen in the World, are the Accomplishment of those Things wherof

whereof our Lord admonished his Disciples Serm.  
 from the Beginning; when, in order to IX.  
 wean them from the Vanities of this pre-  
 sent World, and to raise their Thoughts  
 to a better, he foretold them of the great  
*Calamities* which should fall upon the *Earth*  
 by the righteous Judgment of God, and the  
 much greater *Calamities* which should be  
 brought upon them in particular by the  
*Malice of unrighteous Men.* See (says he)  
 that ye be not troubled, for all these Things  
 must come to pass: ——— For Nation shall  
 rise against Nation, and Kingdom against  
 Kingdom, and there shall be Famines and Pe-  
 stilences and Earthquakes in divers Places:  
 All these are the Beginning of Sorrows. Then  
 shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and  
 shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all Na-  
 tions for my Sake. The Application he  
 makes to them of the whole, is (Luke  
 xxi. 34.) Watch ye therefore, and pray al-  
 ways, that ye may be accounted worthy to e-  
 scape all these Things that shall come to pass,  
 and to stand before the Son of Man.

3dly, If we look upon ourselves still  
 more particularly, as Professors of the re-  
 formed Religion; the Consideration of  
 every Blessing we receive from the Hand  
 of Providence, whether temporal or spiri-  
 tual,



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*tual*, will naturally remind us to express our *Thankfulness to God*, in Ways *suitable* to the *Purity* of the *Religion* we profess, and to the *Knowledge* he has been pleased to vouchsafe us of his *Truth*. We must express our real Sense of his Goodness towards us, by sincerely endeavouring to obey his Will; by departing from every *Kind*, and from every *Degree*, of *Superstition*; by laying aside all unchristian *Heats* and *Animosities* among ourselves, by promoting universal *Peace* and *good Will* among Men; in a Word, by showing that we place our Religion, not in fantastical Notions or in empty Forms, but in a constant rational Acknowledgment of God, in an impartial Love of Truth, and in the habitual Practice of true Virtue, of Sobriety, Righteousness and universal Charity. This if we do, the Prophecy in the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm, we may (not without Reason) hope, even in the first and literal Sense, but in the spiritual and final Sense certainly, it shall be fulfilled to US. *Who so dwelleth under the Defence of the most high, shall abide under the Shadow of the Almighty; He shall deliver thee from the Snare of the Hunter, and from the noisom Pestilence: Thou shalt not be afraid for any Terror by Night, nor for the Arrow that flieth by Day:*

Day: For the Pestilence that walketh in Serm.  
 Darknes, nor for the Sicknes that destroyeth IX.  
 in the Noon-day; A thousand shall fall beside  
 thee, and ten thousand at thy right Hand,  
 but it shall not come nigh thee: There shall no  
 Evil happen unto thee, neither shall any Plague  
 come nigh thy Dwelling.





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A  
SERMON

Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
OF

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, March 31, 1717.

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MATT. xvi. 18.

*And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

THE Occasion and Connexion of Serm. these Words, is this: Our Saviour, examining his Disciples how far they understood the Doctrine they had been taught; asks them, *ver. 13. Whom do Men say, that I, the Son of Man, am?* The very Character he here and elsewhere

P 3

gives



Serm. gives himself, *I the Son of Man*, was a  
 X. sufficiently plain Intimation *Who* he was.

For the Phrase, *THE Son of Man*, necessarily signifies one who is so stiled by way of Eminence or Distinction; and, in Discourse with Persons who had been educated *Jews*, it could not but be understood to refer to the Use of that Title or Character somewhere in the *Old Testament*. Now the Passage where 'tis mentioned in the most remarkable and distinguishing Manner, is in the Prophecy of *Daniel*, ch. vii. 13. *Behold one like the Son of Man, came with the Clouds of Heaven; (The Son of Man, which is in Heaven, as our Saviour styles himself in the Gospel, John iii. 13.) And came to the Antient of Days, and they brought him near before him: and there was given him Dominion and Glory and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations and Languages, should serve him: His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away; and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* The *Jews* all very well knew, that this was a plain Prophecy and Character of the *Messiah*. And therefore our Saviour, by taking upon himself that Title by way of Eminence, *THE Son of Man*, clearly enough intimated, *whom* he professed himself to be. However, in order to put his Disciples upon a more distinct

stinct Declaration how far they had hitherto understood him; and thereby to introduce a new Occasion of giving them further and more particular Instructions; he asks them, ver. 13. *Whom do Men say that I am?* The Disciples answered; some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.* Then said Jesus unto him, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, For Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* That is, the Confession you have made, is not a bare human Conjecture or Opinion; as the Jews had guessed him to be either Elias, or John the Baptist, or one of the old Prophets risen from the Dead: But your Confession, (says he,) is the very Truth, which God has enabled you to discover. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, ver. 18. Thou Simon the Son of Jonah, shalt for the future be known by the Name of Peter, which signifies a Rock, a firm and constant, an unshaken and immoveable, Professor of the Truth. 'Tis very usual in Scripture, to give Men in this Manner emphatical and significant Names. Thus Gen. xvii. 5. *Thy Name shall be Abraham, for a Father of*

Serm. many Nations (so the Word *Abraham* signifies in the Original,) a Father of many Nations have I made thee. Again, *Gen. xxxii. 28. Thy Name shall be called Israel ; for as a Prince hast thou Power with God and with Men, and hast prevailed. So here likewise, thou art Peter, that is, a Rock ; a firm and constant, a faithful and unshaken Witness, Support, and Defender of the Truth. And upon this Rock, upon this Firmness and Steadiness of yours in professing and preaching the great Truths of the Gospel, upon this will I build my Church ; and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.*

In order to the fuller and clearer Understanding of which whole Discourse of our Saviour ; it will be necessary to explain from the Beginning, the Nature and Meaning, the Ground and Reason, of that Metaphor or Figure of speaking, which in numberless other Places of Scripture, as well as in this Text, is used with great Propriety and Elegance in the Description of the Church of Christ. 'Tis to be observed therefore, that God having  
antient-

antiently placed his Name in *Jerusalem*, that is, having appointed it to be the Seat of his Throne and Worship, the Place of Confluence of the Worshippers of the one true God; and thereby made it by way of Eminence *the City of the great King, the holy City*; it from thence became, in the prophetick Style and Language, a Type of *Heaven*. From hence, in the New Testament, the *State of Heaven* is figuratively styled, *Jerusalem which is above*, Gal. iv. 26. *Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem*, Heb. xii. 22. And in the *Revelation* particularly, 'tis described at large, under the Notion of a glorious and happy City; *ch. xxi. 10. He shewed me that great City, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God; having the Glory of God, and her Light was like unto a Stone most precious: — And the City was pure Gold; — and the Foundations were garnished with all Manner of precious Stones.* To which Description, the Apostle plainly alludes, *Heb. xi. 16. He hath prepared for them a City*: And again in the same Chapter, *they desire (says he) a better Country, that is, an heavenly*: And, *Abraham looked for a City which hath Foundations*, (in the Original it is, *THE City which hath THE Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.* Hence still further, in Pursuance of the same Similitude, the *Church of God* even

ver. 16.

ver. 10.



Serm. even here upon **EARTH**, is styled the Ci-  
 X. ty, the Temple, and the House of God. The  
 City of God. *Pf. xlv. 4. The Streams there-  
 of, shall make glad the CITY of God. Heb.  
 xii. 22. Ye are come unto — the CITY of  
 the living God, — the General Assembly  
 and Church of the first-born whose Names  
 are written in Heaven. Also the Temple of  
 God. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Ye are the TEMPLE  
 of God; And 2 Cor. vi. 16. Ye are the TEM-  
 PLE of the Living God. Eph. ii. 19. Ye are  
 Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the  
 Household of God; and are built upon the  
 Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Je-  
 sus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone;  
 in whom the whole Building fitly framed to-  
 gether, groweth into an holy TEMPLE in  
 the Lord; in whom you also are builded to-  
 gether; for an Habitation of God through the  
 Spirit. And 2 Theff. ii. 3. That Man of  
 Sin, — sitting in the TEMPLE of God;  
 That is, a general Apostasy and Love of  
 worldly Power, overspreading the visible  
 Church. Lastly, 'tis styled likewise the  
 HOUSE of God: 1 Tim. iii. 15. The  
 HOUSE of God, which is the Church. Heb.  
 iii. 6. whose HOUSE are we. 1 Cor. iii. 9.  
 Ye are God's BUILDING. 1 Pet. ii. 5.  
 Ye also as lively Stones are built up a spiritual  
 HOUSE unto God. And ch. iv. 17. Judg-  
 ment must begin at the HOUSE of God.*

Now

Now the Church of God being thus usually, (upon the Occasion and for the Reasons already explained,) represented in Scripture under the figurative Notion of a *holy City*, or *Temple*, or *House of God*; the several Parts of it likewise, in Pursuance of the same Metaphor, are described proportionably under the like Characters, and with the like Figures of Speech, as the whole. Hence the Word *Foundation*, as denoting the most material Part and Support of the Whole Building, is elegantly made use of to signify either such Men or Things, such Persons or Doctrines, upon which the whole of Religion mainly relies, and by which it is principally supported.

Sometimes it is applied to Doctrines; To denote those great, those primary, those necessary and essential Doctrines of Religion; upon which all other true Doctrines are built; without which, Religion cannot subsist; and of which no Christian can innocently or excusably be ignorant. These are styled, *Heb. v. 12. The first Principles of the Oracles of God*; and *Heb. vi. 1. The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*, and *the Foundation*. In modern Language, they are usually called the Fun-

Serm. Fundamentals of Religion; the Doctrines,

X. wherein Christianity itself consists; in  
 Opposition to those, which distinguish  
 from each other the several Sects or Parties of Christians. In the former consists all true Virtue and Piety: The latter are the Occasions of never-ceasing Contentions, Schisms and Uncharitableness. What these fundamental Doctrines in particular are, (though St. Paul has given us an express Catalogue of them, *Heb. vi. 1, 2.*) seldom any Sect or Party of Christians are willing to define; because by so doing they would plainly discover, that the Things about which they generally most fiercely contend, are indeed no necessary Parts of Religion at all. But in the Scripture itself, these fundamental Doctrines are perpetually insisted on; and inculcated, as those on which in reality the whole of Religion depends. And the teaching or preaching of these Doctrines, is what St. Paul calls *Laying the Foundation*, (*Heb. vi. 1. And 1 Cor. iii. 10.*) *According to the Grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise Master-builder I have laid the FOUNDATION. But let every Man* (says he) *take heed how he buildeth thereupon: For other Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. The Meaning is, no Man can make any thing else*

else to be fundamental in Religion, be- Serm.  
 sides what Christ himself has made to be so. X.  
*If any Man build upon this Foundation, Gold,*  
*Silver, precious Stones; if he preaches the*  
*true Doctrine of the Gospel, and builds*  
*thereupon virtuous Practice, he shall re-*  
*ceive a Reward, ver. 14. If he corrupts*  
*the Doctrine of Christ in its Essentials,*  
*and teaches Men any vicious Practice, he*  
*shall be punished very severely. If he*  
*builds Wood, Hay, Stubble, that is, if*  
*he teaches needless and useless, though*  
*not vicious Doctrines; he shall suffer Loss,*  
*he shall in great Part lose his Reward:*  
*Nevertheless, for the Sincerity of his In-*  
*tention, he himself shall be saved, yet so as by*  
*Fire, ver. 15. The Sense is, he shall be saved*  
*DIFFICULTLY, as it were out of the Fire;*  
*according to the like Expression in St.*  
*Jude, ver. 22. Of some have Compassion,*  
*making a Difference; and others save with*  
*Fear, pulling them out of the Fire.*

But further: The Word *Foundation*,  
 as it is thus sometimes applied figurative-  
 ly to Doctrines fundamental; so, at other  
 Times, it is in a proportionable Sense, ap-  
 plied likewise to Persons. Thus (in the  
 Passage before-cited,) *Eph. ii. 20. Ye are*  
*built upon the FOUNDATION of the*  
*APOSTLES and PROPHETS. From*  
whence



Serm. whence is derived that elegant and lively

X. Description, Rev. xxi. 14. *The Wall of the City had twelve Foundations, and in them the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb,*

*Jesus Christ himself is the chief Corner-stone:*

*The Apostles and Prophets, are the Foundation:* And the Church or entire Body of

good Men through all Ages, are the whole Building or spiritual Temple of God; in

which ye also, saith the Apostle (ye also, as living Stones, 1 Pet. ii. 5.) are builded to-

gether, for an Habitation of God through the Spirit, and such Persons as, after the first

Preaching of the Gospel, were, in a more eminent and illustrious Manner, Promo-

ters of true Religion; are, by continuing the same Similitude, aptly called Pillars,

Gal. ii. 19. James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be **PILLARS**. And Rev. iii.

12. *Him that overcometh, will I make a PILLAR in the Temple of my God.*

Which Passages, by the Way, teach us to rectify a Mistake in the vulgar Inter-

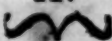
pretation of that noble Text of St. Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 15. *That thou mayst know how*

*how to behave thy self in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the*

**PILLAR** and Ground of Truth. That St. Paul in one and the same Sentence,

wherein he calls the Church the **HOUSE** of God, should at the same Time style it

also

also a *PILLAR*, which is a *Part* of that *Serm.*  
*House*, is very hard to conceive. From *X.*  
 the fore-cited Places therefore, and others   
 of the like Import, where the same Word  
 is always applied to *single PERSONS*;  
 it seems very probable, that here also it  
 ought to be understood, not of the *whole*  
*Church*, but of *one Person* only, even of  
*Timothy* himself: *That thou mayst know how*  
*thou oughtest to behave thy self in the House*  
*of God, which is the Church of the living God*;  
 that thou mayest know how to behave  
 thy self therein in such Manner, (*as being,*  
 or) as that thou mayst be a *Pillar* and an  
 eminent *Support of the Truth*. The Sense  
 is much more reasonable, and agreeable  
 to other Places of Scripture; and re-  
 moves a difficult Expression, much abus-  
 ed and perverted by Popish Writers to  
 support their absurd Doctrine of the In-  
 fallibility of the Church.

Having thus fully and at large explain-  
 ed from its first Original, the Nature and  
 Meaning, the Ground and Reason, of that  
 Metaphor or Figure of speaking, which  
 in numberless other Places of Scripture,  
 as well as in my Text, is used with great  
 Propriety and Elegance in the Description  
 of the Church of Christ; it from hence  
 becomes very easy to understand the true  
 Sense of these Words of our Saviour, *Thou*

*art*

Serm. art Peter. Thou art (as thy Name signifies) a Rock; and upon this Rock will I build my Church. The Church is the City, the Temple, the House or Building of God. In this spiritual Temple of God, Jesus Christ himself is the chief Corner-stone, in whom the whole Building is fitly framed together. And the Apostles and Prophets are the Foundation. Among these, St. Peter having, with a particular Forwardness and Zeal, made Confession of his believing Christ to be the *Messias*; was accordingly approved by his Master, and receives the following Answer: *Thou shalt be (says our Lord,) one principal Foundation-stone in my Building. By thy Firmness and Steadiness, by thy Courage, Constancy and Zeal in this Confession, thou shalt become an eminent Founder of my Church, a most successful Preacher of my Doctrine to the World, in the first Age of the Gospel, Thou art Peter, Thou art a Rock, and upon this Rock I will build my Church.*

It follows: *And the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* That is, Opposition and Persecution, even unto Death itself, shall never be able to stop the Progress of my Gospel. The Word, which we here render *Hell*, signifies in the Original, not the State of the Damned, (for

*That*

That is always in the Greek expressed by a Serm. very different Word :) But the Word X.

here used, signifieth always *that invisible* <sup>Terra.</sup>

State in general only, to which Death is the Gate or Passage. So that this Phrase

in the Text, is exactly of the same Import with those Expressions in the Old Testa-

ment: *The Gates of the Grave, the Chambers of Death, and the Gates of Death.*

Is. xxxviii. 10. *I shall go to the Gates of the Grave.* Prov. vii. 27. *The Way to Hell,*

*going down to the Chambers of Death.* Job. xxxviii. 17. *Have the Gates of Death been*

*opened unto thee?* Ps. ix. 13. *Thou liftest me up from the Gates of Death:* And Psal.

cvii. 18. *They draw near unto the Gates of Death.* When therefore our Saviour

promises that the *Gates of Hell*, that is, of *Death*, (for the Word *Hell*, as I now

observed, when it means *the State of the Damned*, is always in the Original quite

another Word :) When, I say, our Saviour promises that the *Gates of Hell*, that

is, of *Death*, *shall not prevail against his Church*; his Meaning plainly is the same,

as in those other Promises, *Mat. xxviii.*

*20. Lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World*; your Mortality

shall not put an End to the preaching of my Gospel. And *ch. xviii. 20. Where*

*two or three*, (wheresoever or whensoever, in what *Place* or at what *Time* soever in



Serm. any Age of the World, two or three) are

**X.** gathered together in my Name; there am I  
in the midst of them.

Lastly, Our Saviour adds in the next Words, immediately following the Text: *And I will give unto THEE the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: And whatsoever THOU shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever THOU shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.* The Sense is; thou shalt first open the Kingdom of the Messias, and make the first Publication of the Gospel to the Gentiles; (which we read was accordingly fulfilled, in the 2d, 10th, and 15th Chapters of the *Acts*.) And by the Terms of that Doctrine which I commission you to preach on Earth, shall every Man's Sentence be finally and judicially determined of God in Heaven.

And now, having distinctly explained the full Meaning of our Saviour, in this whole Discourse of his to St. *Peter*, it will be very obvious to raise from thence the following Observations.

1st, I observe, that according to the true Explication of the Word, it makes no real Difference at all in the Sense, whether by the *Rock* upon which our Saviour  
here

here promises to build his Church, be <sup>Sent.</sup> meant (as Protestant Expositors general- <sup>X.</sup> ly understand it) the *Confession* of St. Peter, or (as the *Romish* Writers contend) the *Person* of St. Peter. I say, it makes no Difference at all, as to the true Sense of the Words. For, if this *Rock* be the **CONF**-**F****ESS****ION** of St. Peter; yet the Application of the Phrase to *him* in so particular a Manner, must needs be with regard to his personal Firmness and Steadiness in that Confession. And if it be the **P****E****R****S****O****N** of St. Peter, that is here styled a *Rock*, 'tis still with regard to his Firmness in that *Confession*. From whence nothing can be collected to the Advantage of the Cause of the Church of Rome. For

2dly, I observe, that the Word *Rock*, the Foundation-stone of a Building, a strong or well-laid Support, is not at all (as the Church of Rome ridiculously supposes) an Emblem of *Authority, Power* or *Dominion*; but it signifies *firm* and *constant*, effectual and successful, preaching of the Gospel at the Beginning: Which was the Foundation of the Church of Christ. Which Church, the Scripture tells us, was built upon the Foundation of the *Apostles* and *Prophets*. And in that Foundation, St. Peter was a *Rock*, or a firm and eminent Part of it.

Serm.

X.

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3dly, I observe, that immediately after the speaking of these great Things to St. Peter, our Lord, (as it were with a particular View that it might be left upon Record as a Guard against that extravagant Opinion, which he foreknew future Ages, for the Purposes of Tyranny and worldly Dominion would entertain of St. Peter's personal Authority :) our Lord, I say, takes Occasion in his very next Discourse with him, to rebuke him with a sharper Severity than he ever used toward any of the rest of his Disciples. *Ver. 23. Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an Offence unto me; for thou savourest not the Things that be of God, but those that be of Men.* And probably for the very same Reason it is, that he was suffered to fall and to deny his Master, more shamefully than any of the other Disciples; and that 'tis particularly recorded in Scripture-history, how St. Paul afterwards withstood him to the Face, because he was to be blamed, Gal. ii. 11. Of the same Kind seems to be our Saviour's affecting, as it were, to speak always with very small Respect of the blessed Virgin: *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* And, Yea RATHER blessed are they, that hear the Word of God, and keep it. And again, *Who is my Mother,*  
and

and who are my Brethren? ——— Behold, Sermon, X.  
 whosoever shall do the Will of my Father  
 which is in Heaven, the same is my Brother  
 and Sister and Mother.

4thly, I observe, that as the Word *Rock* signifies nothing of *Authority* or *Dominion*, but a *Stone* or *firm Part* in the FOUNDATION on which the Church is built; so it is a *Character*, in which *St. Peter* could not possibly have *Any Successors*; in any other Sense, than in that wherein he himself applies it to *ALL Christians* in general; in his first Epistle, Ch. ii. 5. YE also (saith he) as living Stones, are built up a spiritual House unto God. And *St. Paul* to the *Ephesians*, ch. ii. 22. You also are builded together upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, into an holy Temple: for an Habitation of God through the Spirit.

5thly, I observe, that what is here said to *St. Peter*, is elsewhere applied equally to *ALL* the Apostles. The City of God, saith *St. John*, had twelve Foundations, and in them the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. The Church was built equally upon them *All*. And our Saviour with great Expressness and Earnestness charges them, that there should be no such Thing



Serm. as *Dominion* and *Prebeminence* amongst them;  
 X. but *whosoever* (says he) *will be great among*  
 you, *let him be your Servant*, Matt. xx. 27.  
 Further: That which is here spoken to  
 St. Peter about having *the Keys of the King-*  
*dom of Heaven*, is elsewhere expressly directed  
 to *ALL the Apostles*: John xx. 23. *Whose*  
*soever Sins YE remit, they are remitted unto*  
*them; and whose soever Sins YE retain, they*  
*are retained.* The full Meaning of which  
 sublime Expressions, is that not even the  
*Apostles themselves* (much less that any of  
 their fallible *Succeffors*,) had a *discretionary*  
 Power of forgiving or retaining Mens  
 Sins; but, that they were appointed  
 Preachers and Messengers of that gracious  
 Covenant of Reconciliation, according to  
 the Terms and Conditions whereof, God  
 will either forgive Mens Sins or not. God  
 will judge Men *according to OUR Gospel*;  
 or by the Rule of that Doctrine, which  
 we are commanded to preach to the  
 World. St. Paul expresses the Sense of  
 this Trust, with the greatest Exactness  
 of Expression, Rom. ii. 16. *In the Day,*  
*says he, when God shall judge the Secrets of*  
*Men by Jesus Christ, according to MY Gospel.*

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A  
SERMON

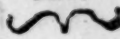
Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
OF  
St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, March 23, 1718.

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GEN. XV. 6.

*And he believed in the Lord, and he counted  
it to him for Righteousness.*

THESE Words are Part of the Serm.  
History of the Patriarch Abra- XI.  
bram. Who when, in his old Age,   
being yet childless, he had a Promise made  
to him, that his Posterity should be as the  
Stars of Heaven for Multitude; notwith-  
standing the natural Improbability of the  
Thing, yet (the Text tells us) *he believed*

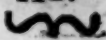
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in

Serm. *in the Lord, and the Lord counted it to him*

X. *for Righteousness.* The Words are very remarkable: And they are in the *New Testament* cited, *three* several Times. By the Apostle *St. James*, once: And by *St. Paul* twice; in his Epistle to the *Romans*, and again in his Epistle to the *Galatians*. By *St. Paul* they are cited to *prove*, that since *Abraham's Faith* was here reckoned to him for Righteousness, *before* the Institution of Circumcision; therefore *Justification*, or the Favour and Acceptance of God, is *not* confined and limited to the Observers of the *Works* of the *Jewish Law*, but extends itself to all Men, of all Nations, who *walk in the Steps of the Faith of Abraham*. By *St. James* they are cited to *prove* at the same Time, that since the *Faith of Abraham* here reckoned to him for Righteousness, was not a mere unactive *Belief*, but an effectual *Principle* of real active Obedience; therefore *Justification* or the Favour and Acceptance of God, is confined and limited, though not to the Observers of the Works of the Jewish Law, yet certainly to the Practicers of the Virtue and Righteousness of the Gospel. The Application of the Words to each of these Purposes respectively, is as natural and pertinent as possible; and the Inference drawn from them, in each Case, is most obvious

Rom. iv.  
13.

obvious and certain. My Design is not, Serm.  
at this Time, to enlarge any further up- XI.  
on the Manner of reconciling St. Paul   
and St. James; (which has often been  
done upon other Occasions, and is suffi-  
ciently evident from the single Observa-  
tion I now mentioned;) but to consider  
what Matter of Instruction may be drawn  
from the *Words themselves*, as they lie before  
us in the Text; Abraham *believed in the Lord,*  
*and he counted it to him for Righteousness.*

*Faith*, or *Belief in God*, is the *Founda-*  
*tion* and Ground of *virtuous Practice*. And  
in Proportion as this Foundation is deep-  
ly and strongly laid, in the same Propor-  
tion will the Superstructure be durable  
and permanent against the Attacks of  
worldly Temptations. For though Vir-  
tue is Virtue, whether there were any  
God or no; and the doing of what is right,  
would be unquestionably commendable,  
though there were no Reward or Punish-  
ment either here or hereafter: Yet, in  
that Case, the Nature of Things would  
be absurd; and the System of the Uni-  
verse would be in the whole, an In-  
consistency. For, that *that* which is  
right in itself, and necessarily *so judged*  
*to be*, by every right Understanding, and  
which by Consequence lays a necessary  
and



Serm.

XI.

and perpetual Obligation upon all; should yet not be *finally and effectually supported*; is really and truly as great an Inconsistency in the Notion of the Moral Universe, as if in the natural World any of the greatest and most exquisite Operations, were without any correspondent final Cause. By this Argument therefore the wisest and most rational Men in the *Heathen* World, who had no Assistance of Revelation at all, yet worked themselves up to a very strong Persuasion, both of the *Being* and of the *righteous Government* of God. By the same Argument the Patriarchs, who had no *Express* Revelation of a future State, yet reasoned themselves into such Acts of Obedience towards God, as overcame the strongest Temptations in the World. Of Instances of this Kind, the whole 11th Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* is an affectionate Collection. And the Application of these Examples, to Christians who profess to have a more explicit Knowledge of a Life to come, is Matter of very just and severe reproach. That which alone falls, at this Time, under our Consideration; and is, more frequently than any, insisted upon in many other Places likewise of holy Scripture; is the Example of *Abraham*; *Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteousness.*

Faith,

*Faith, is that Belief of a God; of his Existence, Perfections, Government, and Promises; That Belief of Things invisible, and of Things future; which is the proper Motive, whereby virtuous and religious Minds are supported in the Practice of what is Just and Right, in Opposition to all the Allurements, and to all the Threatnings, laid before them at any Time by an idolatrous and unrighteous, or debauched World. In Proportion to the Strength or Weakness of this Faith, Minds sensible of the natural and intrinsic Excellency of Virtue, are enabled to resist more and greater Temptations of all Kinds, and thereby to bear Testimony to the Excellency of Virtue, and to cause its Light to shine forth in the World: Which is promoting the Glory of God, and of his Government. These Temptations, are what the Scripture calls the Trial of Mens Faith. And God, when in the Course of his Providence, he permits them to be laid before Men, is in Scripture represented as making Tryal of them thereby. Not for his own Information, who knows perfectly the Hearts of all Men: But for their own Benefit, whose Minds are greatly improved thereby: And for the Advantage of others, who are extremely encouraged by such Examples. It has therefore been the Method*

Serm. thod of Providence from the Beginning,  
 XI. not only by the Precepts of Nature and Reason, confirmed by repeated Revelations of his Will, and strengthened with the Sanction of Rewards and Punishments; but by Example also upon perpetual Record, of some Nation, Family, or very eminent Person, adhering singly to the Worship of the one true God, and to the Religion built upon that only Foundation, to enlighten the World, as it were, by a *Light shining in a dark Place* and continually reminding them of the *Truth* they have departed from: Calling upon them (in the *Prophet's* Expression) by a *Standard lift up unto the Nations*, and by an *Ensign on a Hill*; or (according to our *Saviour's* Similitude) by a *City built upon a Hill*, which cannot be hid; and by a *Light set on a Candlestick, which giveth Light unto all that are in the House*. Of this Kind, was a *Succession of Families* before the Flood; and the *Family of Noah*, and of *Melchisedec* and *Job*, and perhaps some *others* also, and the *Patriarchs* after the Flood. Of the same sort, was the *Nation of the Jews*, even notwithstanding all their particular Corruptions, before the coming of Christ: And since that Time, such also has been the *Christian Church*; in which, notwithstanding the greatest and most universal Cor-

Corruptions, still *the Pearl of great Price*, Sermon. XI.  
the *Principles of Truth and Virtue*, have al-  
ways more or less shined forth, in some  
particular Places at least, as a Light ap-  
pearing through a very thick Mist. But  
that which my present Subject confines  
me to, is the single Example of Abraham:  
*Abraham believed in the Lord, and he count-  
ed it to him for Righteousness.*

If it be here inquired, with Regard to  
this *Method* in the Proceedings of Provi-  
dence; whence it comes to pass that the  
*Light of divine Truth*, and the *Manifesta-  
tions* God has been pleased to make of him-  
self to Mankind, have not been more ge-  
neral and universal: The Answer is; that  
though in *this*, and indeed in all other Ca-  
ses whatsoever, we know not in particular  
the manifold distinct Reasons of God's  
Manner of acting, as indeed 'tis impossi-  
ble we should; yet in general 'tis manifest,  
that this Disposition of Things is accord-  
ing to the *Analogy* of God's usual Method  
of acting in all other Cases. It has seem-  
ed good to infinite Wisdom to show forth  
itself, as in forming an unspeakable Va-  
riety of other Beings of all Kinds, so in  
creating particularly a great Diversity of  
rational Creatures, of Angels and Men;  
endowed with very different Capacities, in-  
trusted



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trusted in numberless Instances with very different Talents, instructed with very different Degrees of Light and Knowledge; so as to be each of them capable of being called to Account, of being judged according to their respective Abilities, according to the Measure and Degree of their respective Knowledge, according to the Nature of their several Stations, and of the Talents in innumerable different Circumstances committed to their Trust. The Case therefore *here* is the *very same*, even in respect of *natural Reason* itself, as of other *more particular* Manifestations of the divine Pleasure. Both the *one* and the *other* have shined forth, only in particular Places, and at particular Times, in different Degrees; as *Lights sufficient* to direct such as were *sincerely desirous* of finding out and following the Truth; and to be a *Testimony* against *others*, who neither liked to retain their *natural Knowledge* of God, nor cared to be instructed in his *Will revealed*. But this by the way.

The *Faith* of *Abraham*, so highly magnified in Scripture, and which (the Text tells us) was *counted to him for Righteousness*, evidenced itself principally in *two* remarkable Instances, the *one* was, his leaving his native Country at the Command of God, separating himself from  
the

the idolatrous Nations around him, and going into a strange Land; firmly believing that God *was faithful, who had promised* that his Posterity should inherit that Land; and that from him, even when as good as dead, there should spring so many as the Stars of the Sky in Multitude, and as the Sand which is by the Sea-shore innumerable, Heb. xi. 12. The other Instance was, *that when he was tried, he offered up his only Son*, in whom alone seemed to center all the Promises God had made him; thus even against *Hope* (as St. Paul most elegantly expresses it,) *believing IN Hope*; and being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, who quickeneth the Dead, and calleth those Things which be not as though they were, he was able also to perform, Rom. iv. 17, 18, 21. The Excellency of this Faith, in both these Instances, consisted in this; that it was a Principle of *Virtue or Obedience to God*, built upon this Foundation; that God who ruleth over all, can and will certainly make good, either in the present or in a future State, all the Expectations raised in the Minds of virtuous and good Men, either by the *natural Knowledge* of his divine Attributes, or by the *revealed Declarations* of his Will. And this the Apostle, in each of the forementioned Cases, *expressly* declares. In the

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XI.

Heb. xi.

17.

Case

Serm.

XI.

Case of *Abraham's* offering up his Son, the Ground he tells us the *Patriarch* went upon, was his Persuasion, that Death itself puts not an End to the Possibilities of the divine Favour; but that God was able to make good the Promises given to him and his Son, even by a Resurrection from the Dead, *Heb. xi. 19.* In the other Case, that of *Patriarch's* separating himself from the idolatrous Nations, and going into a strange Country; the Apostle thus expresses the Ground and Foundation, on which his Faith was built. *Heb. xi. 8.* By Faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a Place which he should after receive for an Inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. And he sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange Country; ——— For he looked for a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. And what that City was, the same Apostle distinctly explains, ver. 14. speaking of Abraham and his Posterity: They that say such Things, (viz. confessing that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth,) declare plainly that they seek a Country: And truly if they had been mindful of that Country from whence they came out, they might have had Opportunity to have returned: But now they desire a better Country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not

not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a City. 'Tis evident therefore that the Faith of Abraham; was a Principle of Virtue or Obedience to God, founded upon the Expectation of a future State. And because he thus believed God, therefore 'twas counted to HIM; and to all others likewise in all Generations, who shall be governed, as he was, by their Belief in God; to them also it shall be counted for Righteousness.

Serm.

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From this Explication of the Nature and Excellency of the Faith of Abraham, there may be drawn some very considerable general Observations, of great Extent and Consequence in the Notion and Practice of true Religion. As

1st. From hence we may observe, that true Faith is always founded upon Reason. Abraham believed, *What?* why, that God would certainly make good to him and his Posterity, even Things that he had promised. And *Why* did he believe this? Why, because Reason told him, that, whatever Improbabilities appeared at present; yet God, who has Power over the future as well as the present State, was able to fulfil his Promises, even by a Resurrection from the Dead.

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This



Serm.  
XI.

argued reasonably that she, tho' a Stranger from the Common-wealth of *Israel*, yet needed not wholly to despair of our Lord's Favour; *O Woman*, says he, *great is thy Faith*, Matt. xv. 28. Upon the same Ground the *Jews*, who could judge well enough about *other Things*, and argue reasonably about the Tokens of the *Sky* and the *Weather*, and make proper Observations in the Course of the *natural World*; but had no Discernment at all, in Matters of *Religion*, are thus reproved by our Lord, *Luke xii. 57. Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?* On the contrary, the *Bereans*, who searched the *Scriptures* carefully, to see *what Reason* there might be for their embracing the Doctrine preach'd by the Apostles, are commended thereupon, as being of a more noble and generous Temper, *Acts xvii. 11.* And *St. Paul* arguing to the *Corinthians* concerning a very important Point of Christian Doctrine; *I speak* (says he) *as to wise Men, judge ye what I say*, 1 Cor. x. 15. This therefore is the first Observation, naturally arising from the foregoing Discourse: viz. that *true Faith*, is always founded upon *Reason*.

2dly, A second Observation is, that *true Faith* in God, never leads Men to the  
Practice

Practice of any Thing, that is essentially *Serm.*  
 and in its own Nature *immoral*. Of this *XI.*  
 Sort are the *Idolatries* practised in the  
 Church of *Rome*, fundamentally destruc-  
 tive of all both natural and revealed No-  
 tions of God. Of the same Kind are the  
*Cruelties* and *Barbarities* perpetually prac-  
 tised by them, fundamentally destructive of  
 all Virtue towards *Men*, and of the very  
 essential, eternal and unalterable Diffe-  
 rences of Good and Evil. Things esta-  
 blished by the *mere positive Command* even  
 of God himself, may, without Contro-  
 versy, be changed by the same Authority  
 that appointed them. Further: Things  
 contrary to *that Part* even of the *Law of*  
*Nature itself*, which is founded original-  
 ly in the *Will of God*, and not in the *Ne-*  
*cessary and Essential* Nature of Things;  
 may be done, upon particular and extra-  
 ordinary Occasions, by the immediate and  
 exprefs command of God. But *that Part*  
 of the Law of Nature, which is founded,  
 not on *Will*, but on the very *Existence of*  
*God*, and on the *essentially and eternally*  
*immutable Nature and Relation of Things*;  
 This is in no Circumstances capable of any  
 Variation. For Instance: That the Life  
 of an innocent Person should be taken a-  
 way by the Authority of any Power upon  
 Earth, is contrary to the *Law of Nature*.

Serm. Nevertheless, since the Right which even  
 XI. an innocent Person has to his Life, is not  
 founded in the *essential* Nature of Things,  
 but merely in the *Will* and *Free-Gift* of  
 God; 'tis plain he may as justly appoint  
 it to be taken away by any *other* Means  
 he pleases, as by a *Fever* or a *Pestilence*.  
 But had God commanded *Abraham* to for-  
 sake the Worship of *himself*, and turn to  
*Idols*; or had he commanded him to  
*hate* his blameless Son, or to *take Delight*  
*in Cruelty, Barbarity, and Tyranny*; the  
 Command had been, in its Nature, *im-*  
*possible* and *absurd*. Again: The seven  
 wicked Nations of *Canaan* might, by  
 a *particular* and *immediate* Command of  
 God, as justly be extirpated by the Sword  
 of the *Israelites*, as by an Earthquake, or  
 (like *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*;) by Lightning  
 from Heaven. But that, *without* any  
*immediate* and *express* Command, and un-  
 der a *general* Pretence of being alone Pos-  
 sessors of the Truth, a *perpetual tyrannical*  
*Enmity* should be carried on against *vir-*  
*tuous* Men of all Nations, and a Power  
 established of changing even the *Nature*  
 of *Virtue* and *Vice*; this is a Wickedness  
 which never had an Equal; and subverts  
 fundamentally even *that Part* of the Law  
 of Nature, which is founded, not on the  
*Will*, but on the very *Being* of God, and  
 on

on the necessary, essential, and eternal Sermon.  
Difference of Good and Evil.

XI.

3dly, The *third* and *last* Observation I would here make, is, that *Faith* when spoken of in Scripture as a Moral Virtue, never signifies *mere Belief*; but always includes in it a Notion of *Fidelity* or *Faithfulness*; a *faithful* and *stedfast* Adherence to such Principles, even in Times of the greatest Danger and Difficulty, as are the *Foundation* or Ground of Virtue and Obedience. Abraham *believed* God; (he had *Faith* or *Fidelity* towards God; adhered firmly to his *Principles*, and acted *steadily* upon them in Matters even of the greatest Tryal and Difficulty: He kept the *Faith*, as St. Paul speaks concerning himself; or, as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses it, he kept that which was committed to his Charge:) And therefore it was counted unto him for Righteousness: It was reckoned to him, it was allowed to him in his Account, (so the Word is in the Original;) not *INSTEAD* of Righteousness, but as being *itself* real Righteousness. This Matter is rightly represented by the Author of the Book of Eccles. ch. xliv. 19. Abraham was a great Father of many People; in Glory was there none like unto him: Who kept the



Serm. *Law of the most high, and was in Covenant*

XI. *with him; — and when he was proved, he was found faithful: Therefore he assured him by an Oath, that he would bless the Nations in his Seed, and that he would multiply him as the Dust of the Earth, and exalt his Seed as the Stars, and cause them to inherit from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the utmost Part of the Land. And from hence 'tis very evident what the Writers of the New Testament intend, when they declare to us that Abraham, though he was not justified by the Works of the Law, such as Circumcision and the like, because this Testimony was given of him before he was circumcised; yet the Faith by*

Jam ii. 27. *which he WAS justified, was an active and steddy Principle of Works of Righteousness: And by that Faith was he therefore justified, because it was a Faith which wrought with his Works, and by Works was his Faith made perfect. And the Application they make of it to Us, is, that they, and they only, who walk in the Steps of the Faith of Abraham, are, in the religious Estimation, Abraham's Seed. That is, they only shall finally be accepted of God, whose Faith is, like His, a real Principle of Virtue and Obedience. Otherwise it matters little, whose Name we are called by, or whose*

*whose Religion we profess. For, unless we Serm.  
bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, God XI.  
is able even of these Stones, sooner than of*  
impenitent and incorrigible Sinners, *to*  
*raise up Children unto Abraham; and unto*  
*Christ.*



which Religion we profess. For, unless we serve,  
 being first given for Repentance, God XI.  
 it is even of itself shown, sooner than of  
 impotent and incorrigible sinners, to  
 raise up Children unto Abraham, and unto  
 God.



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A  
SERMON

Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
OF

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, May 3, 1719.

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JOHN vi. 35.

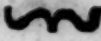
*Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life.  
He that cometh to me, shall never hunger;  
and he that believeth on me, shall never  
thirst.*

**A**S in all Discourses whatsoever, there  
is no Possibility of understanding  
the Sense of what is spoken, with-  
out understanding the Language in which  
that Sense is delivered: So in Scripture  
particularly, unless Men attend to the  
Nature of the Expressions therein used, and  
consider

Serm.  
XII.  
W



Serm. consider the the Figures of Speech, which  
 XII. at the Time when those Books were writ-  
 ~~~~~ ten, were as common and well known, as  
 modern Forms of speaking are at this Day ;
 Unless this (I say) be considered, there is
 no Doctrine so absurd, but may be proved
 from the *Words* of Scripture, without
 Regard to the Sense ; and no Doctrine so
 clear, but may be darkned with Scraps of
 Scripture-Expressions, applied contrary
 to the Design and Connexion of the whole
 Discourse. Thus, for Instance, God's
granting Repentance to Sinners, that is,
granting them the Favour of having their
 Repentance and Amendment accepted in-
 stead of perfect Obedience ; has sometimes
 been understood in such a Manner, as if
 God *worked Repentance in or upon them*,
 as a Workman operates upon a *Machine*.
 Thus, God's declaring the *Christian*
 Church, instead of the *Jewish* Church,
 to be for the future his *elect* People, has
 been thought a Proof of his having cho-
 sen *particular Persons* absolutely and un-
 conditionately to *Salvation*. Thus, the
 Promise of eternal Life to them that be-
 lieve ; though the Scripture in numberless
 Places declares, that thereby is meant *the*
Obedience which proceedeth from Faith,
 has yet been perverted to signify mere *Cre-*
dulity, a mere *Profession* of Religion, mere
Zeal for *particular Parties*, *Doctrines*,
 or

or *Opinions*. And the *Hope of Pardon* Sermon. XII.
 to them that truly repent and reform their 
 Manners, purchased by the Blood of
 Christ; has been turned into a *superstitious*
Reliance upon the Merits of Christ, to
 supply the *Want of Repentance and Amend-*
ment of Life. Again: The Power of
preaching the Gospel, and the Command to
teach all Nations upon what Terms their Sins
 should be forgiven them; has been made
 a Foundation for a *Pretence to a Power of*
forgiving Sins, upon *other Terms* than those
 of true Repentance and Amendment of
 Life. And to mention but one Instance
 more; our Saviour's styling himself the
Bread of Life, giving his *Flesh for the Life*
of the World, and saying concerning the
 Sacramental Memorial of his Death, *this*
is my Body; though the *very same Figure of*
Speech is used in numberless other Places
 of Scripture; and tho' our Saviour himself
 expressly admonishes us in the Instance of
this very Figure, Joh. vi. 63. *It is the Spi-*
rit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing;
the Words that I speak unto you, they are
Spirit and they are Life; yet how often have
 these Passages been alledged as Proofs of
Transubstantiation, of the *Sacrifice of the*
Mass, of the *Aderation of the Host*, and of
 other monstrous *Confusions* in the Worship
 of God! Against this Evil there is no o-
 ther

Serm. ther possible Remedy, but studying the

XII. *Scripture itself carefully and sincerely; in order to find out the real Sense and Meaning, instead of abusing the Words of it. Other Means of discovering the Truth in these Cases, there can be none. Tradition is but a Fiction and a Spectre. Opinions of Men, are Nothing; being infinitely contradictory to each other; mutable as the Successions of Ages, and various as the different Climates and Nations of the Earth. Only with this Difference; that at Rome a tyrannical Despote of Truth, and a Contempt of inquiring after it, is greater than ever was in any other Place; greater in Degree, and larger in Extent; more Authoritative, more wicked, and more absurd. But if Men would use the Scripture as they do other Books, studying it without Prejudice, looking for the Doctrine of Christ in it, and not bringing with them their Opinions before they read it; the Sense of Scripture would be found within itself. Search the Scripture, was our Saviour's Direction to the Jews, Joh. v. 39. And the Reason is given by St. Paul, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 'Tis profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.*

The

The Discourse of our Saviour in this *Serm.*
first Chapter. of St. John whereof my *XII.*
Text is a Part; is a most remarkable In-
stance and Proof of what I have now said.
Never was any Thing more unreasonable
than the Use which has sometimes been
made of such of our Lord's Expressions
as these which follow. *Labour for that*
MEAT, which endureth unto everlasting
Life, ver. 27. *The BREAD* of God, is he
which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth
Life unto the World, v. 33. *I am the Bread*
of Life; He that cometh to me, shall never
hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall
never thirst, v. 35. *The Bread* that I will
give, is my *Flesh* which I will give for the
Life of the World, v. 51. *Except ye eat the*
Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood,
ye have no Life in you, &c. 53. And &c. 58.
He that eateth of this Bread, shall live for
ever. Nothing, I say, can be more un-
reasonable, than the Use which has some-
times been made, and that by great Au-
thorities too, of these Expressions of our
Saviour. And yet if we look over the
whole Scripture, and consider the Phra-
ses of this Kind, that frequently occur in
reading; 'twill be surprizing to observe,
in how usual and frequent, in how ex-
pressive and elegant, in how natural and ob-
vious a Manner, the very same Figure
of

Serm.
XII.

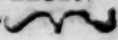
of Speech is made use of, upon a *Multitude* of Occasions. In the following Discourse therefore upon these Words of our Lord, (*I am the Bread of Life: He that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst:*) I shall 1st endeavour, from the whole Tenour and Phraseology of Scripture, to explain the Doctrine here laid down; and to give an Account of the particular Figure of Speech, in which it is expressed. And 2^{dly}, I shall make some Observations thereupon, and Inferences from it.

I. In order to explain the Doctrine here laid down, and to give an Account of the particular Figure of Speech in which our Lord has expressed it; 'tis to be observed, that as the *Happiness of Heaven*, and the *final Favour of God*, is by the inspired Writers represented under the Character of *LIFE*, and *everlasting Life*; so, in the *present Time* here upon Earth, the *State or Habit of Virtue*, is the *HEALTH* of the Soul; And every Degree of *Instruction in the Knowledge of Truth*, and every *Act of Righteousness*, every Degree of *Improvement in virtuous Practice*, is its *FOOD* and *NOURISHMENT*. On the contrary, *Sin* is in Scripture spoken of as a *Disease or Sickness*; Is. i. 4. *Alb sinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquity;*
the

the whole Head is SICK, and the whole Heart faint. And a HABIT of Wickedness is elegantly set forth, as being in a spiritual Sense, the DEATH of the Soul; Eph. ii. 1. You who were DEAD in Trespases and Sins. A Reformation or Recovery from such a State, is described as a Resurrection from the Dead; Eph. ii. 4. God who is rich in Mercy, even when we were dead in Sins, hath QUICKENED us (that is, raised us to Life,) together with Christ. And every Degree of Improvement in the Knowledge of Truth and Right, is, as it were the Support, Nourishment, and Sustenance, of a rational and virtuous Mind. Deut. xxxii. 2. My Doctrine shall drop as the Rain, my Speech shall distil as the Dew; as the small Rain upon the tender Herb, and as the Showers upon the Grass. And Job xxix. 22. Unto me Men gave ear; ——— and my Speech dropped upon them: They waited for me, as for the rain; and they opened their Mouth wide as for the latter Rain. To one who considers these and the like Expressions, nothing can be more natural and obvious than our Saviour's Way of speaking in the Gospel after the same Manner: Job. vii. 37. If any Man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink; If any Man has Probity of Mind to receive Instruction, and is desirous to understand

Serm.
XII.

the Truth, let him attend to the Doctrine of the Gospel. The same Invitation is repeated, Rev. xxi. 6. xxii. 17. *I will give unto him that is athirst, of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely. The Spirit and the Bride say, come, and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.* In the Prophet *Isaiab*, ch. lv. 1. The same Figure is carried still further: *Lo, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters;—come ye, buy, and eat; yea, buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price;—Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your Soul delight itself in Fatness: Incline your Ear, and come unto me; hear, and your Soul shall live.* And Prov. ix. 3. *Wisdom*, (that is, the Doctrine of Virtue and true Religion, of the Fear of God and the Practice of Righteousness; this Wisdom) crieth upon the highest Places of the City: *Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: As for him that wanteth Understanding, she saith to him, come eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine which I have mingled: Forsake the Foolish and live; and go in the Way of Understanding.* There was no Jew in the Days of the Old Testament, but perfectly understood the Sense of these beautiful and expressive Figures of Speech; And they are now as obvious and

and as plain to be apprehended, (in all Serm. Cases where Prejudice and Interest do not XII. interpose,) as the most modern Forms of  speaking. Hence a sincere Desire of knowing and doing the Will of God, an unprejudiced Love of Truth, and an uncorrupt pursuing of what is right ; is by our Saviour called *Hungring and Thirsting after Righteousness*, Mat. v. 6. And the Perfection of his own Practice, is most emphatically set forth in the following Expression, *Job. iv. 34. My MEAT*, saith he, *is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work* In the Book of *Job* it is, *ch. xxiii. 12. I have not gone back from the Commandment of his Lips ; I have esteemed the Words of his Mouth, more than my necessary Food.* And in *Jeremiah*, thus, *ch. xv. 16. Thy Words were found, and I did EAT them ; thy Word was unto me the Joy and Rejoycing of mine Heart.* On the contrary, concerning those who delight in *Wickedness* and take Pleasure in *Unrighteousness*, 'tis affirmed in Scripture, that *the Soul of the Transgressor EATETH Violence, and DRINKETH up Scorning (or Iniquity) like Water.* *Job. xxxiv. 7. xv. 16. Prov. xiii. 2.* And any peculiar extraordinary Corruption in the Doctrine or general Practice of any particular Party of Men, is styled the *Leaven* of those Men, or of that

Serm. Vice : *Matt. xvi. 11, 12. I spake not to you concerning BREAD, that ye should beware of the LEAVEN of the Pharisees,--- but of the DOCTRINE of the Pharisees, which, (Luke xii. 1.) is Hypocrisy. And 1 Cor. v. 8. Not with the LEAVEN of Malice and Wickedness, but with the UNLEAVENED BREAD of Sincerity and Truth. By the same Figure of Speech, the Elements or the first plain and fundamental Principles or Instructions of Christianity, are styled the sincere MILK of the Word, 1 Pet. ii. 2. and 1 Cor. iii. 2. And a more perfect or improved Knowledge in the Doctrines of the Gospel, is, according to St. Paul's Description, strong MEAT belonging to them that are of full Age, even those who by Reason of Use have their Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil. Heb. v. 14. The imbibing, digesting, and practising these Precepts of true Religion, is, in our Saviour's Language, the MEAT which endureth unto everlasting Life, Joh. vi. 27. And ch. iv. 14. 'tis the WATER, which whosoever drinketh of, shall never thirst ; but, it shall be in him a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life. To Persons not conversant in the Scripture-Language, 'tis no wonder that such Phrases as these, seem strange and not easy to be understood. But from the Passages before-cited out of the*

Old Testament, 'tis apparent they were Sermon. XII.
 very common Figures of Speech among the Jews ; and consequently ought to be interpreted according to that Analogy. In the Book of *Ecclesiasticus*, particularly, there is a Passage which gives singular Light to the whole Discourse of our Saviour, whereof my Text is a Part : *ch. xxiv. 19.* Wisdom is introduced, saying, *Come unto me, all ye that be desirous of me, and fill yourselves with my Fruits. For my Memorial is sweeter than Honey, and mine Inheritance than the Honey-Comb. They that EAT me, shall yet be Hungry ; and they that DRINK me, shall yet be thirsty. He that obeyeth me, shall never be confounded ; and they that work by me, shall not do amiss. All these Things are the Book of the Covenant of the most high God. The Phrases ; they that eat me, shall yet be hungry ; and they that drink me, shall yet be thirsty ;* signify in a lively and most elegant Manner of Expression, that the Pleasure arising from the Knowledge of Truth and from the Practice of Virtue, is a Pleasure always New, always Satisfying, and of which a Man can never be Weary. The Phrase used by our Saviour in the Text, *(he that cometh to me, shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst ;)* though it be very diffe-

Serm. rent in the *Construction*, yet the *Allusion*
 XII. is plainly the very same, and the *Sense* not
 at all unlike: *Whosoever embraceth my Do-*
ctrine, and obeys my Instructions, shall never
WANT any Thing necessary to his eternal
Happiness; seeing he has the Means which
will more certainly support him unto everlast-
ing Life, than Meat and Drink maintains
and nourishes the Body in this mortal State.

This being once carefully observed,
 there remains no further Difficulty in un-
 derstanding our Saviour's whole Discourse
 through this Chapter. His calling him-
 self the *Bread of Life* in the Text, and in
 ver. 48. the *living Bread*. ver. 51. and the
Bread which cometh down from Heaven, ver.
 50 and 58. plainly signifies this only;
 that the Belief and consequent Practice of
 the Doctrine of the Gospel, is the Sup-
 port and Preserver of the Soul unto eter-
 nal Life. His Saying, ver. 57. *He that*
EATETH me, shall live by me, is clearly
 explained by the Words of Wisdom, *Eccl.*
xxiv. 21. They that EAT me, shall yet be
hungry: And by our Lord's own Words
 in the Text, *He that COMETH to me,*
shall never hunger; and he that *BELIE-*
VEETH on me, shall never thirst: Where
 the Words, *coming to him and believing on*
him, appear evidently, by the Words *hun-*
ger

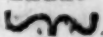
ger and *thirst*, with which they are joined, Serm. XII.
 to be explicatory of what in the 57th W
Verse is styled *Eating*. And his explaining himself, *ver.* 29, 40 and 47, manifestly shows the same thing: *This* (says he) *is the Work of God, that ye BELIEVE on him whom he has sent: — This is the Will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and BELIEVETH on him, may have everlasting Life: — Verily I say unto you, he that BELIEVETH on me, hath everlasting Life; I am that Bread of Life.* There remains only one Phrase more in this Chapter, wherein the same Figure of Speech is carried still further; our Lord in the 51st and 53d and following Verses, setting forth the same Thing under the still higher Figure of *eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood*, which, in the Text, and in several other Verses of this Chapter, he had before expressed by styling himself *The Bread of Life*. But *this* also, when that which has been already said be well understood, will have no great Difficulty in it. For as, in the 15th Chapter of this Gospel, our Lord expresses the spiritual Union between him and his Disciples in the following Manner, *ver.* 5. *I am the Vine, and ye are the Branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him; the same bringeth forth much Fruit:* And as St. Paul without any Danger of
-S 4
being

Serm. being misunderstood, sets forth the same
 XII. Notion still more sublimely thus, *Eph. v.*
 30. *We are Members of his Body, of his
 Flesh and of his Bones* : So in the Place be-
 fore us, after our Lord's styling himself
 the *Bread of Life*, in the same Sense as
Wisdom in the Book of *Ecclesiasticus* says
 concerning herself, *They that EAT me,*
shall yet be hungry; there cannot, without
 great Perverseness, be put a wrong Sense
 upon what he adds, *ver. 56. He that eateth*
my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth
in me, and I in him. For why should not
 what our Lord calls *eating his Flesh and*
drinking his Blood, be as easily understood
 of our *imbibing and digesting* his Doctrine,
 converting it by Way of spiritual Nour-
 ishment into the very Habit of our Mind,
 and into the Practice of our Lives: as St.
Paul is by all Men, even of the meanest
 Capacities, understood without any Dif-
 ficulty to speak in a spiritual and figura-
 tive Sense, when he says of all good Chri-
 stians, that they are *Members of Christ's*
Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones ?

II. Having thus from the whole Te-
 nour and Phraseology of Scripture, ex-
 plained the *Doctrine* laid down in the
 Text, and given an Account of the par-
 ticular *Figure of Speech* wherein it is ex-
 pressed:

pressed : It remains in the second Place, that I briefly make some Observations thereupon, and Inferences from it. And

Serm.
XII.

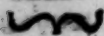


1st. From what has been said, it appears, that in this whole Discourse of our Saviour in *this* sixth Chapter of St. *John's* Gospel, there is no Mention at all made of the *Eucharist* or *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. The Discourse was spoken by our Saviour *long before* the Institution of that Sacrament: And therefore it could never have been applied by any to that Subject, had they not thought the Phrases of *eating his Flesh* and *drinking his Blood*, incapable of being explained to any other Sense. But from the many Passages both of the Old and New Testament, which I have now alledged to this Purpose, 'tis evident that those Phrases, in the *Jewish* Language and Manner of speaking, do very easily signify, the *receiving* and *imbibing*, the *digesting* and *practising* a *Doctrine*: And that the only Reason why our Lord was misunderstood by many that heard him, was that Dulness in some, and that *Perverseness* in others, arising from unreasonable *Prejudices*, which we find him so often complaining of in the Gospel.

2^{dly},

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2dly. If the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is not at all spoken of in this Chapter; then much less can any Argument be drawn from any Expression therein, in Favour of the Romish Doctrine of Transubstantiation. Receiving and imbibing, digesting and practising his Doctrine; is what our Lord here calls *eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood*. And 'tis called so by the like Figure of Speech, (though without any Reference to each other in this Place,) as is used indeed in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and in that of Baptism too. The Bread and Wine, are not themselves literally the Body and Blood of Christ; but the inward Thing signified by those outward Symbols, is the Body and Blood of Christ: Just as, in the Sacrament of Baptism, the being immersed in Water, is not itself the Death and Burial of Christ, but only an outward Sign; the inward Thing signified thereby, is the being buried with Christ in his Death. And the Body and Blood of Christ, is verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper; just in the same Manner, as Persons baptised do verily and indeed die and are buried with Christ. No Man ever was so absurd, as to understand the one literally; and there is no more Reason to understand the

the

the *other* so: But by *both*, Men are intitled, if they be worthy Receivers, to the spiritual Benefits purchased by Christ's Death.

Serm.
XII.

3dly. From hence we may learn in general, how to understand many *other* metaphorical Expressions in Scripture. After the same Manner of speaking, as Christ is here styled the *BREAD* of Life, he is elsewhere styled the *WAY* and the *Life*, the *RESURRECTION* and the *Life*, the *Door* and the *Vine*. He is called the *Word*, and the *Wisdom*, and the *Power* of *GOD*; and he is called the *Righteousness* (or *Justification*) of *MEN*. He and the *Father*, are affirmed to be *one*; and of *Paul* and *Apollos* 'tis said, *He that planteth, and he that watereth, are one*. The *Eucharist* is spoken of, as a *Sacrifice*; and *Praise* is expressly called a *Sacrifice*; and the *Bodies* of Christians are styled *holy and living Sacrifices*: For no *other* Reason, but because these Things, in the *Christian* Institution, succeeded in the Place of the *Sacrifices* which had been offered among the *Jews*. And therefore when some antient Christian Writers style the *Eucharist* an *unbloody Sacrifice*; modern Writers who understand this Phrase in a *literal* Sense, are just as absurd, as if they should

Serm. should understand St. Paul literally when
 XII. he calls Christians *The CIRCUMCISION*
 without Hands; by which he plainly means
 nothing more, but that the *Christian*
Church succeeded in the Place of the *Jew-*
ish, who had in the *literal* Sense been styl-
 ed the *Circumcision*. And by the same Fi-
 gure of Speech; because God who had
 formerly chosen *Jerusalem* to place his
 Name there, has now declared that he
 will be worshipped in *all Places* alike;
 therefore the whole World has sometimes
 been elegantly styled, *The TEMPLE* of
 God; And every *Man*, and every *moral Du-*
ty, is a *Sacrifice* acceptable to him.

4. *Lastly*: Since these and the like *fi-*
gurative Expressions, contain always in
 them a *moral* Meaning and Signification,
 we ought carefully to observe, that in *this*
their moral Meaning only, can they ever
 be of *Use* to us. The *Flesh*, saith our
 blessed Saviour, *profiteth nothing*; *the*
Words that I speak unto you, they are Spi-
rit, and they are Life. The Participation
 of the *Sacrament*, without true Faith, is
Bread, without the *Body of Christ*, Faith
 itself, without Obedience, is (as St. James
 expresses it,) a *Body without Soul or Life*.
Relying on the Merits of Christ, without
doing the Will of his Father which is in
Heaven;

John vi
 63.

Heaven ; can be of no more Use to us, Sermon.
 than the *Death of Christ* would have been, XII.
 if there had never been any *Resurrection*.
 All great Corruptions of Religion in all
 Ages, have arisen by separating the Let-
 ter thus from the Spirit; and in amend-
 ing this Fault, lies the principal Efficacy
 of true Virtue and Goodness.



at St. James's Westminster.
There can be of no more life in us
than the death of Christ would have been.
if there had never been any resurrection.
All great Conversions of Religion in all
Ages have arisen by departing the law-
lessness from the spirit, and in amend-
ing this Law, lies the principal efficacy
of true Virtue and Goodness.

A
SERMON

Preach'd in the
PARISH-CHURCH
OF

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, Dec. 15, 1723.

ECCLES. vii. 29.

*Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made
Man upright; but they have sought out ma-
ny Inventions.*

THIS, not only at this Day, the Serm.
XIII.
greatest and most difficult Que-
stion among *Christians*; but it ~
was so of old among the *Jews* under the
Law; and, beyond *that*, even among the
wiser *Heathens* also, under the State of
Nature, *How Sin and Misery came first*
into

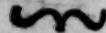
Serm. *into the World: How Man, whose rational*
 XIII. *Faculties seem naturally to lead him*

to discern and choose what is *good*, yet in Event for the greater Part has his Understanding so blinded and apt to be deceived, his Will so biased and inclined to Evil, his Appetites so corrupt and perpetually tempting him to forbidden Objects; his Passions so ungovernable, and unwilling to submit to Reason; that if a Judgment was to be made, not from the *Faculties* of Men, but from their *Actions* only; if we were to take our Estimate, not from the Obligations of our Nature, but from the Experience of Mens Practice; it might be imagined that, not *Virtue* but *Vice*, was natural to Mankind, and the proper Effect of their original Composition. For otherwise, if *originally* God made Men *upright*, and *Virtue* was naturally most agreeable to their Frame, how then was it possible (will it be obvious to ask,) that they could almost universally *seek out* so many evil *Inventions*? And if the *Inventions* they have sought out, are so many and so evil, that they can hardly be conceived to arise but from something faulty in their very Nature; how then can it be comprehended, that God nevertheless created them *originally upright*? If God be perfectly *good*; (as perfect Goodness is of Necessity included in

in the very Notion of God;) how is it Sermon:
possible that any of the Works of his Hands, XIII.
should become so *evil*? And if the *Inven-*
tions of Men be so *evil*, as Experience
too manifestly declares them to be; how
is this reconcileable with a firm Belief,
that yet *God*, who made them, is per-
fectly *good*? When we begin with con-
sulting our *natural Notions of God*, Rea-
son and Demonstration represent him to
us of Necessity so intirely and absolutely
good, that we are apt to expect, *what-*
ever is the Product of such a Cause, *what-*
ever is the Workmanship of such an Au-
thor, should have impressed upon it no
obscure Image, should carry with it no
small Resemblance, of the Perfections of
its Maker. On the other Hand, when
we begin with considering Things as *in*
Fact they are in the World, and observe
the extreme Wickedness of the greater
Part of Mankind; 'tis then very hard to
apprehend, how so very frail and sinful a
Creature, could come out of the Hands
of an All-merciful and good *God*. Too
hard was this Speculation, for the Philo-
phy of the Heathen World; and it drove
many of their Disputants to argue them-
selves into an Imagination of an irresist-
ible *evil Cause*, in perfect Opposition to,
and of equal Power with, the Supreme
Good. But the Impossibility of two Su-
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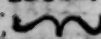
Serm.

XIII.



preme Causes, being demonstratively apparent; Others, with much greater and better Reason, resolved all the Evil and all the Wickedness in the World, into the *free Choice* and *voluntary* Corruption of Men, whose Nature God originally had created good. And yet even still a Difficulty remained, whence it came to pass, that tho' the *Nature* of Man, as of God's creating, had indeed nothing *actually* in it but good; yet it should be so *frail* and fallible, so *prone* to Evil, and so *apt* to be seduced, as by Experience it was found to be. The true Occasion of this, is *briefly intimated* to us in the sacred Writings, in the History of the *Fall of Man*. And evidently there is nothing any Way inconsistent with the divine Goodness in *this*, that God whose inexhaustible Wisdom and Power shows forth itself most properly in producing a never-failing variety of Creatures of different Natures, Capacities and Faculties, should suffer the *Posterity of Adam* to be of a more frail and fallible Nature, more subject to Temptation and more prone to be deceived, than they would otherwise have been, after their first Parent had forfeited those Advantageous Circumstances of his first Creation, to which he had *originally* no more Right, (but by the free Gift and mere good Pleasure of God,) than he had to the Powers


Powers and Perfections of an *Angel*. And *Adam* might with as just Reason have complained against the Goodness of God, because he was not created an *Angel* in *Heaven*, as we can, for our not being born in *Paradise*. Nor is it more inconsistent with the divine Goodness, to suffer us, in Consequence of his introducing Sin into the World to become more frail and fallible, *more peccable* and obnoxious to Temptation, than he at first was; than it was inconsistent with the same Goodness to make him, by the original Condition of his Creation, subject to Temptation and to Sin at all. In a Word: Either we must be so unreasonable as to assert, that the Goodness of God cannot allow him to make any Creature at all, because no Creature can be originally and absolutely incapable of Sinning: Or else, by the same Reason he may likewise, reconcileably with his Goodness, make all *Variety* of Creatures, in all the various Degrees of Frailty and Liableness to Temptation: Always excepting that, of being necessarily and unavoidably Wicked and Miserable; and always supposing, that God will finally judge with perfect Equity these *frail* Beings, each of them according to what he has, and not according to what he has not. And still much less inconsistent will it be with the same divine Goodness, to

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permit the Posterity of a sinful and depraved Creature, to continue by *natural Consequence* in a lower and more obnoxious Rank of Beings, than possibly they would have been placed in, had no such Depravation been introduced either by our *first Parent*, or by *any of his Successors*.

Some Writers have indeed, without sufficient Warrant from Scripture, carried this Matter further; and have asserted that for the Sin of *Adam*, not only himself and his Posterity were made subject to *Death*, and to all the *Miseries of this mortal Life*, consequent upon the Earth's being cursed for his Sake; and that they became very *weak and frail*, exposed to *more Temptations*, and *more prone to Sin*; but that moreover all Mankind, for that *one Transgression* of their *Forefather*, were actually liable to be condemned to the Punishment of *eternal Torments*; and were by Nature so *wicked* and so entirely indisposed to all Good, that the Will of Man had thenceforward no more Liberty to choose what was Right, than a dead Man has Power to restore himself to Life. But these Things, the Scripture does not teach; how great soever it represents the Depravity of Human Nature. And indeed, to suppose that *God himself* sends Men into the World, under an absolute

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Necessity in their very Nature, of being *Serm.*
Wicked and Miserable; is not much bet- *XIII.*
 ter, than what some Heathens imagined, 
 of their being made so by the Power of
 an opposite supreme *evil Principle*. How
 much more wise and reasonable is the
 Determination of *Solomon* in the Text :
 Who in Matters of Difficulty and deep
 Inquiry, in Things wherein it is impossi-
 ble for the narrow Understanding of short-
 sighted Mortals to discover the whole Or-
 der and Method, the Occasion and Rea-
 son of many of the divine Proceedings;
 advises us to *separate* the *Certain* from the
Uncertain; to adhere to what we certain-
 ly know to be true, and not be moved
 from it by the Uncertainty of what we
 cannot discover ! For so he concludes a
 difficult and profound Inquiry; *Lo, this*
only have I found.

He had been in vain searching into the
 Depths of Providence, and attempting to
 comprehend the Counsel of the most
 High. And indeed, what Wonder is it,
 that Man, who sees so *small a Portion* of
 the Works of God from the Beginning to
 the End, should not be able to compre-
 hend the Wisdom of the *Whole* ? *All this,*
says he, have I proved by Wisdom, &c. 23.
I said, I will be wise, but it was far from
me : That which is far off, and exceed-

Serm. *ing deep, who can find it out? And then he*
 XIII. *concludes in the Words of the Text;*
Lo, this only have I found.

Among the Things impossible to be discovered by human Understanding, there is still always *something* certain and to be depended upon; *something*, in which a rational Person may acquiesce and rest satisfied; *something*, on which he may with Confidence fix his Foot. *Lo, this have I found.*

The particular Inquiry, upon Occasion of which the wise Man makes this Conclusion, was the Consideration of the Difficulty I now mentioned; viz. What might be the Reason of the exceeding great Depravity and Corruption of Human Nature, *ψ. 25. I applied mine Heart to know, and to search, and to seek out Wisdom, and the Reason of Things, and to know the WICKEDNESS of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madnes.* And the Result was: *Lo, this only have I found; that God hath made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

In the Words, we may observe these two Things. 1st. A general Direction or Intimation, that in all Questions of Difficulty whatsoever, we ought to separate what

what is *certain*, from that which is *un-* Sermon.
certain: And never think it a sufficient XIII.
Reason to depart from *one Truth*, that our
Faculties have not enabled us to discover
All. Lo, THIS ONLY have I found. 2dly.
An *Application* of this general Direction,
to that great Question in *particular*; whence
the *Corruption* and *Depravity* of *Human Na-*
ture arises. *This have I found, that God has*
made Man upright, but they have sought out
many Inventions.

First, Here is a general Direction or In-
timation; that in all *Questions of Difficulty*
whatsoever, we ought to *separate* what is
certain, from that which is *uncertain*; and
never think it a sufficient Reason to de-
part from one Truth, that our Faculties
have not enabled us to discover *All. Lo,*
This only have I found. The Works of
God are infinite and boundless; and the
Understanding of Man is limited and fi-
nite. We cannot therefore comprehend
the whole Works of God, because our
Understandings are *not infinite*; and yet,
because we have Understanding given us,
therefore we ought to endeavour to un-
derstand them *in part*. The Scripture fre-
quently declares the Incomprehensibleness
of the Works of God: And no where
more emphatically, than in this Book of

Serm. *Ecclesiastes*, Ch. iii. v. 11. He has made eve-

XIII. ry Thing beautiful in his Time; also he has
 set the World in their Heart; so that no Man
 can find out the Work that God maketh, from
 the Beginning to the End. Again, ch. viii.
 17. Then I beheld all the Work of God, that
 a Man cannot find out the Work that is done
 under the Sun; because though a Man labour
 to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea
 further, though a wise Man think to know it,
 yet shall he not be able to find it. And ch.
 xi. 5. As thou knowest not what is the Way
 of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow
 in the Womb of her that is with Child, even
 so thou knowest not the Works of God, who
 maketh all. Nevertheless, both by Reason
 and Scripture we are directed to study
 the Works of God; that, by what we
 can discover, we may learn to admire and
 adore his Wisdom in what we cannot discover;
 and by what we are able to understand,
 be convinced of the Excellency of
 the Things that exceed our Comprehension.

To instance in Particulars. In what
 Manner this beautiful Fabrick of the
 World was made, and how the several
 Parts of it in particular were formed; the
 greatest Philosophers upon Earth have by
 no Means been able to discover. This
 only

only have they found, that these Things are Sermon. evidently the Works of an intelligent and powerful Cause, and cannot possibly be the Effects either of *Chance* or of *Necessity*. XIII.

In *what Manner* the several Steps of Providence in the Government of the World, shall finally be cleared, has been a Thing too hard for the wisest of Men to comprehend, and a Depth inscrutable to the most enlarged Understandings. *This only*, are they well assured of; that *the Judge of all the Earth, will do what is right*; will deal equitably with all Persons, according to their respective Circumstances; and that, at last, he will conspicuously *be justified in his Saying, and be cleared when he is judged.*

In *what particular Manner* God's Fore-determination of many Events, and his Fore-knowledge of all, is reconcileable with that *Liberty* of Human Actions, without which there could be no Religion, no Punishment, no Reward; is a Secret which we shall then perhaps clearly and thoroughly understand, when the Books of Providence shall be laid open, and the *Secrets of all Hearts shall be disclosed*; when *the Lord shall come with ten thousands of his Saints*, not only to execute

Serm. *cute Judgment upon Men, but also to convince*
 XIII. *(as St. Jude expresses it,) that is, to satisfy, in their own Reason and Consciences, all that are ungodly among them, of their ungodly Deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard Speeches which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him. In the mean Time, this only do we know for certain, and in this may we with Assurance acquiesce, that God made not Death, neither hath he Pleasure in the Destruction of the Living; nor doth he, by any absolute Predetermination, bring Wickedness and Misery necessarily upon any Man; but ungodly Men with their own Words and Works call it unto them.*

Again; *Wherein the Nature and Dignity of the Person of Christ (beyond what God in Scripture has thought fit to reveal to us) precisely consists, and in what particular Manner those supereminent Attributes, which the Scripture ascribes to him, are communicated to him from the Father; is what neither Men nor Angels can perfectly understand. This only may Christians of all Capacities be assured of, and may with Confidence depend upon it; that whosoever imbraces the Doctrine which our Saviour taught, and obeys the Laws which he has delivered; and, in order to obtain Remission of past Sins, makes*
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constant *Application to God in HIS Name* and through *his* Intercession, as being our alone *Mediator* with the Father; and lives in constant Expectation of his appearing finally as our *Saviour and Judge*, to complete our Reconciliation in the Day of Redemption, and to reward every Man according as his Work shall be: Whosoever (I say) heartily professes this Faith, and perseveres in this *Practice* by patient Continuance in well-doing, though he enters into *no* difficult Speculations, and confines his Thoughts entirely to what he clearly understands; yet *this* he may be assured of, and abundantly sufficient it is, if but *this only* he can find, that (according to the gracious Terms of the Gospel-Covenant) he shall certainly be Partaker of the Salvation purchased by the Son of God, *manifested in the Flesh*.

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Lastly; To give but one Instance more, (which is that alluded to by *Solomon* in the Text:) How it comes to pass, that in a World created by infinite Goodness, and governed by the Providence of the same good God, yet *Wickedness* should abound so universally as it does; and our first Parents introducing Sin into the World, should be permitted to have so great and lasting an Effect, that many Men seem as it were *originally* and *almost naturally* to have

Serm. have strong Inclinations to Vice; though
 XIII. something has already been offered, and
 more will be said in the following Part of
 this Discourse, to explain this Difficulty
 in some Measure; yet, unless we knew
 the *whole Series* of Providence from the
 Beginning to the End, from the Creation
 of the Universe to the final Consummati-
 on of all Things; 'tis no great Wonder
 we should not fully understand the whole
 Counsel of God, nor be able, in this *very*
short and imperfect State, to search out to
 the Bottom so unfathomable a Depth.
This only do we find demonstrably certain;
 as being both clear in the *Reason* of Things,
 and most expressly moreover declared in
Scripture, (and abundantly sufficient it is,
 for our present Satisfaction,) that, what-
 ever Difficulties may *now* arise in this Mat-
 ter, yet in the *End* it shall appear to the
 Conviction of Sinners, (so that every
Mouth shall be stopped before God; stop-
 ped not by *Power*, but by the *Reason of*
the Case; and every Tongue shall confess
 his Justice,) that God did *make Man up-*
right; only *they* themselves *have sought out*
many Inventions.

In these and numberless other Instan-
 ces, appears the reasonableness of the ge-
 neral Direction or Intimation given us in
 the Text; that, in *all Questions of Diffi-*
culty

culty whatsoever, we ought to *separate* what is *certain* from that which is *uncertain*; and never think it a sufficient Reason to depart from *one* Truth, that our Faculties have not enabled us to discover *all*.
Lo, this only have I found.

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In *finite* Understandings, which are not capable of comprehending *all* Knowledge, not of discovering all Truth, 'tis the highest Improvement they can arrive to, and deserving the greatest Commendation, to be able rightly to distinguish what they *can*, from what they *cannot* discover; and so to rest satisfied and acquiesce in what they find, as not to entertain any Doubt concerning the Certainty of *one* Truth, because of the Uncertainty they chance to meet with in *another*.

If we find by strong and undeniable Arguments; that the beautiful *Order* of the several Parts of the World, could not possibly arise from *Chance*; nor the infinite *Variety* of Things therein, from blind and unintelligent *Necessity*, nor the exquisite *Fitness* wherewith every Thing is adapted to its proper End, from any *other Cause* than the Will and free Operation of an All-powerful and All-wise Being: Is not this sufficient Satisfaction to a reasonable Mind, though he cannot comprehend

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prehend the *Manner* how each particular was formed? Or, because there are *some* Things; which, for *what End* they were made, our narrow Understandings cannot discover; is there *therefore* from thence any Colour of Reason to doubt, whether any Thing was made for *any End at all*.

In like Manner, if we find by evident Demonstration, that he who in the Beginning *made* the World by his *Power*; cannot but *govern* it unto the End by his *Providence*; is not this sufficient to satisfy a rational Person, tho' he cannot at present account for all its Proceedings? Or, is it in any Degree reasonable, because the Counsels of a great Prince *before* they are entirely put in Execution; are above the Comprehension of a mean Person; that therefore that mean Person should conclude the Counsels of the Prince to have *no Wisdom* in them, or should doubt whether he had *any Counsels* or *Designs* at all.

Again: If we are by Experience as much assured of the *Liberty* of our *Wills*, as we are of the *Truth* of our *Understandings*, or the *Reality* of our *Senses* themselves; and have the same Thing moreover confirmed to us, by all the Promises and all the Threatnings of God, and that the divine *Fore-knowledge* is no *Fore-determina-*
tion

tion of our Actions, but only an *unerring* Sermon.
Judgment, or such a *Kind* of Prescience, XIII.
 (whatever *that* be) as is consistent with
Liberty, and necessarily *presupposes* the *Li-*
*ber*ty of those Actions which are fore-
 known to be free, have we not abundantly
 wherein to acquiesce, though we know
 not the particular Manner of the divine
Fore-knowledge ? Or, because there is some
Uncertainty in the *particular Manner* of re-
 conciling it with human Liberty, is there
therefore any Reason to call in Question
 the *Thing itself*, which of all others is the
 most absolutely *certain* ? and pretend to
 doubt whether we have *any* Liberty, that
 is, whether there be *any* such Thing as
Religion, any such Thing as *Reason*, any
Understanding in Man, or any *Power of act-*
ing at all ?

Further : If we are assured by a clear
 and distinct Revelation, that God has
 sent his *Son* into the World, to teach us
 our Duty, and set us an Example of prac-
 tising it; to *die for the Sins*, and *rise again*
for the Justification of all who shall *effectually*
repent and reform their Manners; to
 make Intercession for us at present, and
 bring us hereafter unto Glory: Is not *this*
 sufficient to all the Purposes of Religion
 and Happiness, though we understand not
 the *Manner* of his *Generation* from the
 Be-

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Beginning, nor *what* the Particulars of *that* Glory were, *which* he had with the Father before the World was? Or, because reasonable Men do not take upon them to define, (as the Schoolmen have presumptuously done,) *how* and in *what* particular Manner our Lord was before all Ages the Brightness of his Father's Glory and the express Image of his Person; is there therefore any Reason to doubt, whether we have any Saviour, any Religion, any Hopes of Happiness at all?

Lastly; If it be clearly demonstrable by right Reason, and moreover asserted in express Words of Scripture, *that* God has made Man upright, but they themselves have sought out many Inventions: Have we not wherein to acquiesce, though *this* only be all that we have found; and we do not perhaps distinctly understand the Reason, *why* the All-wise Governor of the World, has thought fit to permit Men thus to corrupt themselves? And this brings me to the

Second Particular I proposed to speak to; namely, the Application of the general Direction I have been hitherto discoursing upon, to that great Question in particular, *whence* the Corruption and Depravity of Human Nature arises. *Lo,*
this

this only have I found, that God has made *Serm.*
Man upright, but they have sought out many *XIII*
Inventions. But the Time not permitting
to enter upon this, I shall conclude at
present with two very brief *Inferences* from
what has been already said.

The *FIRST* is ; that the Rule laid
down in the foregoing Discourse, extends
only to the express Revelations of God,
and not to any Doctrines or Explications
of Men:

The *SECOND* is ; that, from what
has been said, we may see the great Un-
reasonableness of *Scepticism* in Matters of
Religion; and the Absurdity of those,
who from the Uncertainty of some Que-
stions of great *Difficulty* and of *small Con-*
sequence, would draw Reasons for doubt-
ing in Matters of the *greatest Certainty* and
of the *utmost Importance*. In Questions of
Natural Philosophy, Men do not so argue :
In the Management of *worldly Affairs*,
they do not so act; but *separate* always
what is *certain*, from that which is *uncer-*
tain: And the *Uncertainty* of one Thing,
does not hinder them from relying, in all
the Business of Life, upon the unquesti-
onable *Certainty* of another. There is the
same, nay much stronger Reason, why
they should act in like manner in Matters

Serm. of Religion: Where that which is of the
 XIII. greatest *Importance*, is always of the great-
 est *Certainty*; and whatever is *less certain*
 and more difficult to be understood, is
 also always proportionably of *less Moment*.
 We have upon this Head, the final Ad-
 vice of *Job*, and the last and most confi-
 derate Words of *Solomon*. The former of
 whom, concludes his Discourse concern-
 ing the Uncertainty of all other Know-
 ledge, with this admirable Reflection,
Job xxviii. 28. And unto Man he said; the
Fear of the Lord, That is Wisdom: and to
depart from Evil, is Understanding. The
 latter having in a whole Book elegantly
 represented the Confusion and Uncertain-
 ty of all human Affairs, sums up his whole
 Discourse in this wise Admonition, *Eccles.*
xii. 13. Let us hear the Conclusion of the
whole Matter: Fear God, and keep his Com-
mandments; for this is the whole, the whole
Duty and the whole Happiness, of Man.

A
SERMON

Preach'd in the
PARISH-CHURCH
OF

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, Dec. 22, 1723.

ECCLES. vii. 29.

*Lo, this only have I found, that God hath
made Man upright; but they have sought
out many Inventions.*

THE Book of *Ecclesiastes* is a Col-
lection of the general Conclusions
drawn by *Solomon*, from his Ob-
servations upon human Nature, and on
the State of the World. He was a Per-
son of whom the Scripture says, that
God gave him *Wisdom and Understanding*
U 2 exceeding

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exceeding much; such as none of the Kings had that were before him; neither shall there any after him have the like; 1 Kings iv. 29. and 2 Chron. i. 12. His own Experience of all the Injoyments of Life, and his high Station in the World, gave him the greatest Opportunities, and the largest Field, to improve his Understanding by the most general Observations; and to make the truest Judgment of the real Value, of every Thing in the World. I the Preacher was King over Israel in Jerusalem; and I gave my Heart to seek and search out by Wisdom, concerning all Things that are done under Heaven, ch. i. v. 12. I communed with mine own Heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great Estate, and have gotten more Wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my Heart had great Experience of Wisdom and Knowledge; and I gave my Heart to know Wisdom, and to know Madnes and Folly, v. 16. The Result of all was, that he found every Thing to be Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit. That, even in Wisdom itself, is much Grief; and he that increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow. That Laughter and Joy, is Madnes; and Mirth, what Benefit is there in it? That, when Goods increase, they are increased that eat them; and what good is there to the Owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their

their Eyes? That he considered all the Oppressions that are done under the Sun; and behold, the Tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the Side of their Oppressors was Power, but they had no Comforter. That, with Respect to the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life, MAN also knoweth not his Time; but as the Fishes that are taken in an evil Net, and as the Birds that are caught in the Snare, so are the Sons of Men snared in an evil Time, when it falleth suddenly upon them. That, notwithstanding this, yet the Hearts of the Sons of Men were full of evil; and Madnes is in their Heart while they live; and after that, they go to the dead. That he applied his Heart to know and to search out the REASON of these Things, and to know the Wickedness of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madnes. That all these Things he proved by Wisdom, and said he would be wise, but it was far from him; for, that which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out? The Particulars were impossible even for his Understanding to discover. But, in general, this he was sure of, that God was true, though every Man was a Liar; that God was righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works; and Man, the Cause of all his own Misery. Lo, this only have I found,

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Serm. *ibat God has made Man upright, but they*
 XIV. *have sought out many Inventions.*



In the Words, I have observed these two Particulars. 1st, A general Direction, or Intimation; that in all Questions of Difficulty whatsoever, we ought always to separate what is *certain*, from that which is *uncertain*, and never look upon it as a sufficient Reason to depart from *One Truth*, that our Faculties do not inable us to discover *All*. *Lo, this only have I found.* 2^{dly}, An *Application* of this general Direction, to That great Question *in particular*, *Whence the Corruption and Depravity of Human Nature arises.* *This only have I found, that God has made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

The 1st of these, I have already discoursed upon. It remains that I consider at this Time, (2^{dly}) the *Application* the Wise Man makes of this general Direction, to That great Question *in particular*, *Whence the Corruption and Depravity of Human Nature arises.* *This only have I found, that God has made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.* Now there is in this, as in most other Questions, something that is *uncertain* and difficult to be explained; something that the
 Un-

Understanding even of *Solomon* himself Sermon. XIV.
 could not attain to; something, that 'tis
 not possible for us to find out, nor need-
 ful for us to desire to know; something
 that is to be resolved perhaps into the
 mere good *Pleasure* of God; or rather into
 Reasons (for God does nothing without
 Reason,) which we at present are *not at*
all capable of judging of; *why* God in his
 infinite Wisdom thought fit, among that
 immense and boundless Variety of his
 Works to make some Creatures of such a
particular Degree of Capacity and Under-
 standing, so frail, so fallible, so liable to
 be seduced and corrupted, as Mankind is.
 To *this Part* of the Question 'tis suffici-
 ent to reply with the Apostle; *Shall the*
Thing formed, say unto him that formed it,
Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the
Potter power over the Clay, of the same Lump
to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another
unto Dishonour? That is, Hath not God a
 Right to make what Variety of Crea-
 tures, and of what different Capacities,
 he pleases? But then there is also *on the*
other Hand something in the same Questio-
 on that is very *certain*, something that is
infallibly true and may be depended upon,
 something in which a reasonable Mind
 may *acquiesce* and rest satisfied; *viz.* that
 though God has indeed made us *frail*

Serm. *and fallible*, yet he has not made us *necessa-*

XIV. *rily wicked*; He has made us subject and liable to *Temptation*, but not of necessity Slaves to *Sin*. That we are capable of corrupting ourselves, is indeed the Consequence of that Nature which God has given us: But all *actual* Corruptions, are the Effects of our *Free Choice*, and the Fruit of *our own* Inventions. *God has made Man upright, but They have sought out many Inventions.*

Of this Declaration of the Wise Man, there are two Parts. 1st, A Justification of God, from all Possibility of being charged with the Sins of Men: *God has made Man upright.* 2^{dly}, A Confession, that the Sin and Misery of Men, is wholly owing to themselves: *But they have sought out many Inventions.*

I. Here is a Justification of God, from all Possibility of being charged with the Sins of Men: *God has made Man Upright*, Could wicked Men with any truth affirm, that Wickedness was the Fault of their Nature, and not merely the Corruption of their *Will*, it would be a just Excuse both in the Sight of *Men* and before the Tribunal of God, to alledge that they *Were* only what *God made* them, and what they

they could not but of Necessity be. There is nothing therefore more constantly and solicitously inculcated in Scripture upon all Occasions, ~~than~~ that Mens Destruction is of themselves, and not the Appointment of him that made them. And upon this are grounded all the *Promises*, and the Reasonableness of all the *Threatnings* of God. But though Wickedness is not Mens Nature; yet Weakness and Temptation, and Liableness to Sin, *is*. And the very Nature of a Probation-State, the Promises of Reward to Obedience, and the Threatnings of Punishment to them that shall comply with Temptations, *supposes* Men to be *capable* of being corrupted, and to be always in *danger* of being seduced into Sin. Serm. XIV.

'Tis evident therefore, *1st*, That God's having made Man *upright*, does not signify his having made him *incapable* of Sin, or exempt from all Temptation. No : This is perhaps a State that no Creature ever was, or can be, created in. For *he chargeth even his Angels with Folly, and the Heavens are not pure in his Sight*. Not only the Angels that *fell*, and incurred irrecoverably the final Wrath of God, appear evidently to have been created capable of Sinning: But the *good* Angels themselves, who kept their first Estate, and never

Serm. never forfeited their Title to the Divine
 XIV. Favour; even These the incomprehen-
 ~~~~~sible Purity of the Holy One charges with  
 Folly. And nothing is perfectly faultless  
 in the All-seeing Eyes of Him, who alone  
 is Goodness and Holiness it self. And in-  
 deed, could any Creature be made origi-  
 nally and absolutely incapable of sinning,  
 there would be no Room for Trial, there  
 could be no Probation, there could be no  
 Obedience, and no Reward: But the  
 Happiness which such a Creature would  
 enjoy, would be by Nature compleat and  
 indefectible, like to the Happiness of God  
 Himself. Which is inconsistent with the  
 Nature of a Created Being.

2dly, Therefore; Neither from This  
 Expression of God's having made Man  
*upright*, ought it to be imagined, that  
 God originally created *Man* in that Ex-  
 cellency of Nature, which *Angels*, who  
 yet were liable to Sin, were at first en-  
 dued with. There is a *proper* Excellency,  
 peculiar to every Species or Kind of  
 Things. And as, in the *Natural World*,  
 God created every thing perfect in its  
 kind; and beheld when he had finish'd it,  
 that it was very good: And yet one  
 thing, tho' perfect in its Order and De-  
 gree, is nevertheless very far from equal-  
 ling the Perfections of Another, that be-  
 longs

longs to the more exalted Rank of a nobler Species: So, in the *Moral World* of rational and intelligent Creatures, there are Capacities and Faculties, there are Perfections and Excellencies, *peculiar* to every Sort of Beings, and appportionate to their proper Subject. And as we always understand, when we say God has given to such or such a Person, Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge: As we always (I say) understand thereby, that he has indued That Person in a remarkable Manner with the Knowledge and Wisdom of a *Man*, not with That of a Superior and more Powerful Spirit: So, when the Preacher declares in the Text, that God did make Man *upright*, 'tis manifest it must be understood, that he created him with the *Uprightness*, not of an *Angel*, but of a *Man*; with *such* an Uprightness, as is compatible to a frail, mortal, and fallible Creature.

3dly, Further yet; Neither can the Words of the Text be so interpreted, as if *Solomon* meant to speak of *That particular Uprightness*, wherein our first Parent was created in *Paradise*; in Opposition to that *general State of Corruption*, which has ever since prevailed in the World. For he does not insist upon *This*, that God created our *first Parent upright*, but upon *This*, that, notwithstanding all that can  
be



Serm. *be said* of the Meanness and Frailness of  
 XIV. our Nature, notwithstanding all the Dis-  
 advantages we *can* alledge our selves to  
 lie under in consequence of Sin having  
 been brought into the World; yet *still*  
 God has made Man upright, *Man*; That  
 is, the *Species* or whole Race of *Men*: All  
 those particular *Men*, who in the follow-  
 ing Words are said to *have sought out ma-  
 ny Inventions*. The Uprightness therefore  
 here spoken of, cannot be *That original*  
 Uprightness, which was forfeited by the  
 Sin of our first Parent; but *That continued*  
 Uprightness, with which every Man now  
 comes into the World, notwithstanding  
 the Fall; *That* Uprightness, which every  
 wicked Man, in his own proper Person,  
 is justly condemned for voluntarily de-  
 parting from, by seeking out and follow-  
 ing his own evil Inventions. And *This*  
*Uprightness*, which belongs even to *Fallen*  
 Man, and which is necessary to discharge  
 God from the Sins of Men, consists in  
 this; That, notwithstanding all the *Weak-  
 ness* and *Infirmity* of our Nature, which  
 God, who considers that we are but Dust,  
 readily allows for; and, notwithstanding  
 all the *Consequences* of the Fall of *Adam*,  
 which are abundantly provided against by  
 the Death of Christ; and notwithstand-  
 ing all our *Temptations*, and all our Prone-  
 ness

ness to Sin: Yet no Man is under a *Necessity* of being Wicked: No Man can say 'tis the Fault of God's Creation, no, not even of that *frail Nature* which he receives from *Adam*, but the Wicked Choice of his own unreasonable Will, that makes him live *vitiously*, and comply with those Temptations which in this frail State naturally and perpetually surround him. That we are perpetually *liable to Temptation*, is indeed the weak Condition of our Nature, and the Unhappiness of our present State. But *Temptation* is not *Sin*; And being *tempted*, is not inconsistent with *Uprightness*: That is, 'tis not inconsistent with *such Uprightness*, as God expects of us in this very frail, fallible, and imperfect State. Did God *now* require of us the Uprightness of *Angels*, or even the Uprightness which our first Parents ought to have maintained in Paradise, we might perhaps have had Reason to complain, that the Abilities of our Nature were not answerable to what was expected from us. But since the Obedience and Holiness required of us, is only of the *same Kind and Proportion*, with *that Uprightness* our Nature *still* retains ever since the Fall, 'tis evidently not the Fault of *God*, nor of that *Nature* he even *Now* gives us, but the wicked *Inventions* only of our own Hearts, that make us wicked  
and

Serm. and miserable. God has given us *Eyes* to  
 XIV. discern the Light, *Understanding* to distin-  
 guish between Good and Evil, a *Will*  
 whereby we are inabled to choose the one  
 and refuse the other. And in the *Truth*  
 or *Reality* of these Faculties, not in the  
*Perfection* of them; that is, not in their  
 being such as *CANNOT* be deceived or im-  
 posed upon, but in their being such as  
*do not necessarily deceive US* without our  
 own Negligence and great Fault; in *this*  
 consists the Uprightness wherewith God  
 now sends Men into the World, even  
 since the Fall.

There is only *One* great Objection, a-  
 gainst what has been hitherto offered up-  
 on this Head. And that is, that the Doc-  
 trine of *Original Sin* has by Divines some-  
 times been so explained, as if Man, since  
 the Fall, had no remains left of those  
 Powers and Faculties, which alone di-  
 stinguish him to be a free and rational A-  
 gent. Which Explication if it were true,  
 'tis evident the *Sins of Men* would indeed  
 immediately become chargeable upon God.  
 And, far from making Man *upright*, as  
*Solomon* affirms, it would on the contrary  
 be true, that he now makes Men *not so*  
*much as capable* of any *Religion* at all. For  
 the clearing of this Prejudice therefore,  
 we

we need only here, as in all other Difficulties, *separate* the *Certain* Doctrine of Scripture, from the *Uncertain* Explications of Men: And then the whole Ground of the Objection will be taken away. Now all that the Scripture teaches concerning this Matter, is contained in what it affirms, *1st*, Concerning the *Transgression it self* of our first Parents; and *2dly*, Concerning the *Consequences* of that Transgression, to them and their Posterity. Serm. XIV.

*1st*, The History of the *Transgression it self* of our first Parents, is related very briefly in the third Chapter of *Genesis*. And though neither there, nor elsewhere in Scripture, it is called by that Name, yet it may very properly be called the *Original Sin of Men*, because it was the first introducing of Sin into this World; and, before it, there was no such Thing as Sin upon Earth. The *Original Sin of Men* therefore, was the *Actual Sin* of our first Parent: But it could not be the *Actual Sin* of any other Person, because it was committed before any other had a Being. To affirm that the *first actual Sin* of *Adam*, was *imputed* to all Mankind as well as to him; is to affirm what the Scripture does not teach. And besides, if, to impute to *other Persons* the *actual Sin*



Serm. *Sin of One*, be to account it *Theirs* as well as

XIV. *His*, 'tis evident this is impossible with

~~~~~ God, who cannot account *Sin*, or *any thing else*, to be what it is not.

But 2dly, Though the *Actual Transgression* of our first Parent, was *His* only, and not *Ours*; yet there are the *Consequences* of thus introducing *Sin* into the *World*, which are common to *Him* and his *Posterity*. And these are, *Mortality*, *Exclusion out of Paradise*, the *Miseries of the present Life*, and a *greater Liableness and stronger Temptation to Sin*, in their *corrupt Affections*. God threatned *Adam*, that in the *Day* he eat of the *forbidden Fruit*; that is, whensoever he should knowingly *presume* to do what God had thought fit to *forbid*; he should surely die. And had that *Threat* been *immediately* executed, 'tis plain his *Posterity* could have had no *Being* at all; and as plain, that no *Injustice* could thereby have been done to *them*, who never *Were*. But the *Mercy* of God granted *Adam* a *Reprieve*; and instead of *dying* immediately, he only became *subject to Mortality* by his *Sin*. That is, being now excluded from the *Benefit* of the *Tree of Life*, (which was a *Means* or an *Emblem* of *Immortality*.) consequently his *natural Mortality*

Mortality must of necessity *actually* take place upon him. And so it must likewise upon all his Posterity. In which matter, since it was merely the Effect of God's Mercy towards *Adam*, to permit us a Possibility of beginning to live; it cannot be thought unjust, that he should appoint us to die. Especially since *that Death* which was introduced by *Adam*, (and whatever would have been the Consequences of it in the future State; was as universally removed by the second *Adam*, (who is the Lord from Heaven,) as it spread universally after the Transgression of the first. For as in *Adam* all die, (all Men are made mortal;) even so in *Christ* shall all be made alive, (shall be restored from that natural Mortality,) Rom. v. 22. And as, by the Offence of One, Death came upon all Men to Condemnation; even so by the Righteousness of One; the free Gift is come upon all Men to Justification of Life, v. 18. that is, to a Possibility again of obtaining eternal Life.

As to the Exclusion out of *Paradise*, and the Miseries of the present Life consequent upon God's cursing the Earth, they are with regard to the Posterity of *Adam*, only natural and necessary Consequences of his losing those free Gifts and Favours of God, which neither *They* nor *He* ever had

Serm. any Claim of Right to injoy. And, after
 XIV. all, the Miseries Men bring upon them-
 selves in this World by their *own Sins*,
 are much greater than those they suffer
 in Consequence of the Transgression of
Adam. For, notwithstanding God's Curse
 upon the Earth, the Condition of Men
 would be in many Degrees better than it
 is; nay, even very tolerable, did it not
 perpetually happen, that One Man's Sin
 makes him a Tyrant to Others, and an
 Enemy to himself. And that *Men*, who
 have their *Beings* through Mercy, should
 undergo the *natural Calamities* of this *mor-
 tal State*; cannot be unjust with God,
 any more than that they should at all be
born Mortal. Nor can any Reason be
 given, why God might not have made
 Men *at first* to live but such a certain
 Number of Years as they *Now* do, if he
 had so pleased; nor why he might not
originally have put them into the World
 with only *such a Proportion* of Good to be
 injoyed by them, as virtuous and good
 Men may *now* injoy in this World, if all
 Men were truly virtuous and religious.

Lastly; As to the *Temptations and Lia-
 bleness to Sin*, which are greater and stron-
 ger since the Fall, through Mens cor-
 rupt Affections; they are by no means in-
 consistent

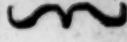
consistent with *that Uprightness*, which I Serm.
 am now speaking of. For *Temptation* is XVI.
 not *Sin*, but the *Tryal* and the Occasion
 of *Virtue*. And God, who knows how
 to make just *Allowances* for every one's
 Case, with the most exact Proportion and
 Equity; may prove the sincere Obedience
 of his Creatures, by what Tryals and
 Temptations he himself, in his All-wise
 Government, thinks fit to permit. In
 all which, 'tis certain that God makes no
 Man *wicked by Nature*; but every Man
then sinneth, *when he is drawn away of his*
own Lust and inticed. For, *when Lust has*
conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin,
when 'tis finished, bringeth forth Death, Jam.
 i. 15. And this may suffice for Explica-
 tion of the *first* Part of the Wise Man's
 Assertion in the Text, in Justification of
 God from all Possibility of being charged
 with the Sins of Men; that *God has made*
Man upright.

II. Here is in the 2d Place a Confessi-
 on, that the Sin and Misery of Men, is
 wholly owing to *themselves*: But *THEY*
have sought out many Inventions. And con-
 cerning this, there needs not much to be
 added. For when it has once been made
 appear, that God made Man *upright*; that
 is, that notwithstanding all the Infirmi-
 ties of their Nature, he has yet endued

Serm. them with *proper Faculties* for their *present*
 XIV. State, to enable them to perform the Du-
 ~~~~~ ty that is expected of them, according to  
 the Proportions of a *Man*, in this very  
 imperfect State; it follows in Course,  
 that the *Corruptions* wherewith they de-  
 prave themselves, are not the Fault of  
 that Nature which God has given them,  
 but the perverse *Inventions* of their own  
 Wills. And indeed, whoever looks into  
 the World, cannot but observe, that much  
 the greater Part of the Vices of Men, a-  
 rise plainly from bad Education and ill  
 Example, from the Allurements of the  
 World and the Temptations of ill Com-  
 pany, from the Violence of ungoverned  
 Passions and the Perverseness of unreason-  
 able Desires: None of which things do  
 belong properly to the *Nature* of a rea-  
 sonable Creature, but are unreasonable  
 and violent and therefore *unnatural* Cor-  
 ruptions of the Faculties wherewith God  
 has indued us.

To enter into the *Particulars* of *All* vi-  
 tious Habits, would be impossible, as well  
 as disagreeable. But, to mention briefly  
 the three great Heads or Instances of Cor-  
 ruption.

1<sup>st</sup>, With respect to our Duty towards  
 God. Is it not evidently *agreeable to the*  
*Na-*

*Nature of rational* Creatures, to adore and *Serm.*  
 worship, to love and to obey, the supreme *XIV.*  
 Author and Preserver of their Being?   
 And is it not an unnatural *Invention*, sought  
 ought by the most brutish Degeneracy,  
 to forsake the Worship of Him that made  
 the Heavens and the Earth and the Seas  
 and all that in them is, to worship Wood  
 and Stones graven by Art and Man's De-  
 vice; and to change the Glory of the incor-  
 ruptible God, into Images made like to corrup-  
 tible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed  
 Beasts, and creeping Things? Or even in the  
 Service and Worship of the True God,  
 to forsake that Method of Worship which  
 he himself has appointed; and set up any  
*Inventions of their own*, in the Place of what  
 God has expressly commanded.

2dly, With regard to our Duty to-  
 wards Men: Does not *Nature* plainly lead  
 us to Righteousness and Truth, to Justice  
 and Equity, to universal Charity and  
 Good-Will towards each other? And is  
 it not apparently the base *Invention* of a  
 Heart which has laid aside all Humanity,  
 that is, all true human *Nature*, to enrich  
 itself by Fraud and Unrighteousness, by  
 oppressing the Innocent and the Poor; or  
 to exalt itself by Violence and Cruelty,

Serm. and insulting over the Miseries of its Fel-  
 XIV. low-Creatures?

W

*Lastly*, With regard to our Duty to-  
 wards *Ourselves*: Are not the Appetites of  
*Nature*, reasonable and modest, regular  
 and sober, peaceable and contented with-  
 in their proper Limits? And is it not  
 plainly the *Invention* of an evil Heart, and  
 of a wilfully degenerate and corrupted  
 Spirit; to heighten unnatural Appetites  
 by Art, to blow up disorderly Passions by  
 obstinate Self-Will, and to indulge un-  
 reasonable Desires by habitual Opposition  
 to right Reason and Religion?

In all these Cases therefore 'tis mani-  
 festly true, that *God has made Man upright,*  
*but they themselves have sought out many In-*  
*ventions.* *Inventions*, to corrupt by in-  
 direct Practices the Simplicity of Nature;  
 And when they have so done, *Inventions*  
 to deceive themselves, by giving the Name  
 of *Nature* to the unnatural Effects of evil  
 Customs and Habits; and *Inventions* to lay  
 themselves asleep in their Error and De-  
 ceit, by finding out numberless Ways of  
 reconciling a *wicked Life* with the Hopes  
 and with the Pretences of *Religion*.

The

The Application of what has been said, may be very brief. And,

1<sup>st</sup>, From what has been said, we may observe, that the Difficulty of obeying the Commandments of God, does not so much arise, generally speaking, from the Nature of our *Duty*, or from the Nature of *Man*; as from the Temptations of the *World*, and from the *Custom* of Sinning. To Idolatry, Prophaneness and Irreligion, there is no Temptation in Nature; but from the Wickedness of Men, wilfully deceiving one another, and being deceived. To Iniquity, Cruelty and Injustice, there is nothing in *human Nature* that prompts us; but the Vices are *inhuman* as much as unchristian, and the Effects only of unreasonable indulged evil Habits. To Intemperance and Debauchery, there are indeed in many Persons strong Inclinations, that may seem more *natural*, and to be more immediate Effects of Man's original Corruption; being a *Law in the Members*, warring against the *Law of the Mind*, and bringing Men into Captivity to the *Law of Sin* and Death. But even these Inclinations, are *Temptations* only, and not *Sins*; unless they be consented to and indulged, in *unreasonable* and *unlawful* In-



Serm.  
XIV.

stances; which God has given us the Use of Reason, and the Obligations of Religion, on purpose to restrain. If therefore it be *natural* to Man to be a *reasonable* Creature, 'tis *natural* to him also to be *Religious*; Religion being nothing else but the highest Reason, and the keeping our Passions subject and obedient to its Laws. Wherefore when St. Paul affirms, *Eph. ii. 3.* that *we all were by NATURE Children of Wrath*; 'tis a very great Abuse of Scripture, to understand him as if he had said, that *we were CREATED Children of Wrath*. For the *Nature* the Apostle there speaks of, is not *that Nature* wherein God created us, but *that second Nature* of evil Habits, which wicked Men bring upon themselves by *Custom* in Sinning; *that Nature*, which we usually mean even in common Speech, when we say 'tis the *Nature* of a profane or vitious Man, to act profanely or vitiously. For so are the Apostle's *express* Words: We were *by Nature*, saith he, *the Children of Wrath, even as Others*; because among them *WE* also had our Conversation in Times past, in the Lusts of our Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind: Speaking of Christians, converted from Heathen Wickedness and Idolatry.

And

And this shews, in what manner also are to be understood such Texts as these which follow. *Babold, I was SHAPEN in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother CONCEIVE me*, Ps. li. 5. *The Wicked are estranged from the WOMB, they go astray as soon as they are BORN, speaking Lies*, Psal. lviii. 3. *I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a Transgressor from the WOMB*, If. xlviii. 8. *They were a naughty Generation, and their Malice was BRED in them, and their Cogitation would NEVER be changed*, Wisd. xii. 10. The Meaning of all these Texts is, not that Men were really wicked by Necessity of Nature; but 'tis a Complaint of them, that they were so wicked and corrupt, as if, speaking by way of Similitude, it had been bred even in their very Nature. But that it is not so meant literally, appears from hence, that, on the contrary, the same manner of speaking is used concerning good Men also. *Job. xxxi. 18*, describing his own Charitableness to the Poor, he saith, *from my YOUTH, he (the Poor) was brought up with me; and I have guided her (the Widow) from my Mother's WOMB*. And *Ecclus. i. 14*. describing very righteous Men, he saith, *To fear the Lord, is the Beginning of Wisdom; and it was created with*

Serm. *with the Faithful in the WOMB.* The

XIV. Meaning is; such Persons are as just and righteous, as if Virtue (comparatively speaking) had not been a Matter of *Choice*, but as if it had really been a Part even of their *Nature itself*.

2dly, From what has been said, we may see the Reason of the *Manner* of our Saviour's Admonition to his Disciples; when, taking up a young Child in his Arms, and recommending its *natural* Simplicity, Humility and Innocence; he told them, that *except they were converted and became as little Children, they should not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; for that of such *was the Kingdom of God*. And St. Paul makes use of the same Similitude, 1 Cor. xiv. 20. *In Understanding, saith he, be Men, but in Malice be ye Children*; that is, be ye like to those who have not yet sought out any evil *Inventions*.

3dly, We may from hence observe, how great the Sin of those is, who by ill Advice, or bad Example, *corrupt* the Minds of *Children*, or of *Men*. This is, in the highest Degree, being like unto *Satan*, the great Tempter and Destroyer of Mankind. And if *they* shall severely

severely be punished, who comply with Serm.  
those Temptations which rob them of XIV.  
their *own* Innocency, and destroy that  
*Uprightness* wherein God had created  
them; of how much sorer Punishment  
shall *Those* be thought worthy, who in-  
dustriously labour in teaching Others also  
to seek out evil *Inventions*.





...the punishment, who comply with ...  
...temptations which rob them of ...  
...innocence, and deliver them ...  
...God and eternal ...  
...of how much more punishment ...  
...shall they be charged with, who in ...  
...the joyful labor in teaching others ...  
...to the same end.



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A  
SERMON

Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
OF  
St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, Dec. 29, 1723.

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ROM. IX. 23, 24.

*And that he might make known the Riches  
of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which  
he had afore prepared unto Glory: Even  
Us whom he hath called, not of the Jews  
only, but also of the Gentiles.*

**T**HERE is no Part of the whole Sermon.  
New Testament, of greater difficulty to be understood, or which  
has been more misapplied by the Ignorant,  
more

XV.

Serm. more wrested by the Learned, and more  
 XV. falsely interpreted by the melancholy pi-  
 ous Person, than this 9th Chapter of St.  
*Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. In which  
 Chapter, whilst some have greatly per-  
 plexed themselves by picking out some of  
 the middle Verses of it, concerning God's  
 electing the *Children which were yet un-*  
*born*, and had *neither done good nor evil*;  
 concerning his *loving Jacob*, and *hating*  
*Esau*; concerning his *hardning Pharaoh*;  
 and *shewing Mercy on whom he will have*  
*Mercy*, and *having Compassion on whom he*  
*will have Compassion*; and concerning his  
 having the same Power over Mankind;  
 as the *Potter* has over the *Clay*, to make  
 one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dis-  
 honour: Whilst some, I say, have great-  
 ly perplexed themselves by picking out  
 some of these Particulars singly; 'tis yet  
 nevertheless very evident, both from the  
 Apostle's *Introduction* of his Discourse at  
 the *Beginning* of the Chapter, and from  
 his *Conclusion* and summing up of his Ar-  
 gument at the *End*; that the Design of  
 the *Whole*, is not at all to speak concern-  
 ing any Decree of God, with Respect to  
 the *final and eternal State of particular Per-*  
*sons*; but only to declare both the sove-  
 reign Power and the Justice of God, in  
 distributing to different Nations in di-  
 vers Ages *what different Advantages* he  
 pleases;

pleases; and revealing his Will to them Serm.  
at *what Times* and in *what Manner* he thinks XV.  
fit. As, in that great Instance of his re-  
jecting the *Jews*, and calling in the *Gentiles*: Which, at the *Beginning* of the  
Chapter, the Apostle expressly declares to  
be the Aim and Intention of his Discourse:  
And at the *End* he sums it up, as the Con-  
clusion designed: And all the *intermediate*  
Parts of it, and the Examples therein al-  
ledged, are plainly nothing but *Similitudes*  
and *Illustrations* of this Argument.

The Words of the Text itself, are as  
clear a Declaration of this whole Matter,  
as can be desired. *That he might make*  
*known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels*  
*of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto*  
*Glory; even US whom he has called, not of*  
*the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.* Here  
the Apostle clearly and expressly declares,  
that by the *Vessels of Mercy, prepared afore*  
*of God unto Glory,* (of whom he had been  
treating in the foregoing Part of the Chap-  
ter,) he does not mean *particular Persons*  
chosen unconditionally to *eternal Salva-*  
*tion;* but the *whole Body* of Christians,  
even *Us whom he has called,* (and who have  
obeyed that Call by believing in Christ,)  
not from among the *Jews only, but also of*  
*the Gentiles:* Called, to receive that Grace  
and



Serm. and Mercy, and to embrace those Advan-  
 XV. tages of the Gospel; by rejecting of  
 which, the *Jews* became Vessels of Wrath  
 fitted to Destruction. And *We*, in like  
 manner, notwithstanding our being at  
 present the Vessels of Mercy, yet, if *we*  
*live unworthy* of the same Advantages, the  
 Apostle bids us beware, lest, since God  
 spared not the *Jews*, the natural Branch-  
 es, much more he also spare not Us, who  
 were but ingrafted after their Fall.

But to enter into a more full and par-  
 ticular Explication of the Apostle's *whole*  
 Discourse. In the *foregoing Part* of this  
 Epistle, he had shown at large, that the  
*Gentiles*, by corrupting themselves con-  
 trary to the Law of *Nature*, (*ch. i.*) and  
 the *Jews* by disobeying the Law given  
 them from Heaven, (*ch. ii.*) were *Both*  
*of them* become equally liable to the  
 Wrath of God: For that, God being no  
 Respector of Persons, *as many as have*  
*sinned without the Law, shall perish without*  
*the Law; and as many as have sinned in the*  
*Law, shall be judged by the Law,* chap. ii.  
 v. 12.

*That* therefore the Insufficiency of *Both*  
 these Laws, either to preserve Men from  
 Sin, or to furnish them with sufficient  
 Means

Means of Reconciliation after Sin ; I Sermon.  
 say, the Insufficiency of *Both* these Laws XV.  
 evidently appearing; consequently both  
*Jews* and *Gentiles* were obliged to believe  
 in *Christ* ; embracing and obeying the  
*Grace* or *gracious Terms* of the Gospel, as  
 as the only Means of Justification for the  
 future, (ch. iii.) *For since all have sinned,*  
*and come short of the Glory of God,* they  
 can only be justified freely by his *Grace*;  
*through the Redemption that is in Jesus*  
*Christ,* v. 24. That is, *All* being Sin-  
 ners, they can none of them claim Sal-  
 vation by the Merit of their Obedience,  
 but merely through the gracious Pardon  
 of Sin freely granted to Penitents thro'  
 Faith in Christ.

*That* this Justification by *Faith* with-  
 out *Works*, (that is, by the Obedience of  
 the Gospel alone, without the Ceremonies  
 of the Law,) was abundantly sufficient;  
 because it was the same, by which *Abra-*  
*ham* himself, the Father of the Faithful,  
 had been justified, (ch. iv.) *For the Pro-*  
*mise was not to Abraham or to his Seed*  
*through the Law* (the *Mosaic Law*, )  
*but through the Righteousness of Faith,*  
 v. 13.

*That* this Justification by the Faith and  
 Obedience of the Gospel, affords much  
 Y greater

**Serm.** greater Assurance of present Peace and  
**XV.** Reconciliation with God, and of eternal  
 Life and Glory hereafter, than the Law  
 could do, (*ch. v.*) For if, (saith he) when  
 we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God  
 by the Death of his Son; much more being  
 now justified by his Blood, we shall be saved  
 from Wrath through him, *¶. 9.*

That this free Justification by Grace  
 through the Faith of the Gospel, without  
 the Ceremonies of the Mosaick Instituti-  
 on, obliges Men to a stricter Obedience, to  
 greater Purity and Holiness of Life, than  
 the Law itself had done, (*ch. vi.*) Chri-  
 stians being now made free from Sin, and  
 become the Servants of Righteousness; being  
 dead unto Sin, but alive unto God, through  
 Jesus Christ our Lord, *¶. 11 and 18.*

That the Law of Moses, was by no  
 Means able to deliver Men from the Bon-  
 dage and Slavery of Sin; from forbearing  
 to do the Good they would, and from do-  
 ing the Evil they would not; from the  
 Law in their Body, warring against the  
 Law of their Mind, and bringing them into  
 Captivity to the Law of Sin and Death,  
 (*ch. vii.*) But that the Gospel, having de-  
 livered Men from the Body of this Death,  
 from the Bondage of Corruption into the glori-  
 ous Liberty of the Children of God, enabled  
 them

them to prevail, not only over the Temp-  
tations of Sin within themselves, but al-  
so over all the Persecutions and all the  
Powers of the World, (*ch. viii.*) *For the  
Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus,  
hath made me free from the Law of Sin and  
Death. And now, Who shall separate us  
from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribu-  
lation, or Distress; or Persecution; or Fa-  
mine, or Nakedness; or Peril; or Sword?*  
*Nay, in all these Things we are more than  
Conquerors, through him that loved us, &c.  
2 and 35.*

The Apostle, I say, having largely  
proved these several Particulars in the  
first *Eight* Chapters of this Epistle, pro-  
ceeds in this *Ninth* Chapter to answer a  
great Prejudice and strong *Objection*, which  
he foresaw would be raised by the *unbe-  
lieving Jews*, against what he had hither-  
to been pleading for. For, if his Doc-  
trine deliver'd in this Epistle was true,  
the Consequence was plain, that whoso-  
ever of the *Jews* rejected the Gospel, it  
would follow, notwithstanding their be-  
ing descended from the *Patriarchs*, to whom  
all the *Promises* were made; notwith-  
standing their being the *peculiar People*  
of God; notwithstanding that *to them*  
*were committed the Prophecies and Ora-*



Serm. cles of God; notwithstanding that to them  
 XV. pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, and  
 the Covenants, and the giving of the Law,  
 and the Service of God, and the Promises;  
 it would follow, that they were still ne-  
 vertheless out of the Way of Salvation, in  
 the most zealous Observance of the cere-  
 monial Righteousness of the Law; unless  
 they believed in *Christ*, and obeyed the Gos-  
 pel, which is the Righteousness of Faith.  
 This the *Jews* thought to be an impossi-  
 ble Doctrine, and contrary to the Pro-  
 mises of God made to their Fathers the  
 Patriarchs; and that therefore it was on-  
 ly an Effect of the Apostle's Zeal and Pre-  
 judice against them, since his forsaking  
 Them, and being converted to Christianity.  
 To this Objection therefore he replies at  
 large, in this ninth Chapter; by showing  
 that there was no Injustice in God, no  
 Breach of Promise; no Change of his Will,  
 in rejecting the unbelieving Jews, and  
 receiving in the Gentiles; since even ori-  
 ginally the Promise was not made to All  
 the Children of Abraham, but to Isaac on-  
 ly; and not to both the Sons of Isaac,  
 but to Jacob only: And, of the Posterity  
 of Jacob, All were not Israel, which were  
 of Israel; but, in Elijah's Days, seven  
 thousand only were the true Israel; and,  
 in the Time of Isaiah, though the Number  
 of

*of the Children of Israel was as the Sand of the Sea, yet a Remnant only was to be saved: XV.*

And during the whole Period of the Law, God had Mercy on whom he *would* have Mercy, and Compassion on whom he *would* have Compassion: *That is*, not on the whole People promiscuously, but on whom *he himself* pleased, who was the *Alone* competent Judge, and who *Alone* could infallibly distinguish such as were truly stedfast in their *Faith* or *Fidelity* towards him: And whom he would he *hardened*; that is, out of obstinate and incorrigible Offenders, he chose whom he pleased, to make remarkable Examples of his Wrath and Vengeance. Since this, saith the Apostle, was the Case *Originally*, and the Method of God's Proceeding all along; much more at the coming of the *Messias* into the World, who was the End of the Law, might God justly reject and cast off the Unbelievers; and reckon those only the true Children of *Abraham*, who imitated the Faith and Obedience of that great Father of the Faithful: *Making known the Riches of his Glory*, as the Text expresses it, *on the Vessels of Mercy*, which he had afore prepared unto Glory; even *US* whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

Serm.

XV.

This being premised *in general*, and the principal Force of the Apostle's Argument explained; the several *Particulars* of his Discourse in this Chapter, which have often been so widely mistaken and so strangely misapplied, may without much Difficulty be understood. In the *first five Verses* he begins with an *Apology* for himself, that, in this whole Doctrine concerning the Rejection of the *Jews*, he was not at all influenced by any *Prejudice* or *Hatred* he had contracted against his Country-men since his Conversion to Christianity. So far from *that*, that on the contrary he calls God to Witness in the most solemn manner, that his Grief and Trouble of Mind for their Impenitency and Incredulity, and for their consequent Rejection, and the Judgments God would send upon them, was much greater and more uneasy to him, than all the other Afflictions and Calamities he met with in the World. *I say the Truth in Christ*, (says he) *I lie not, my Conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great Heaviness and continual Sorrow in my Heart: For I could wish that MYSELF were accursed from Christ, for my Brethren my Kinsmen according to the Flesh.* The Expression is highly figurative and affectionate. And melancholy pious Persons

sons have sometimes been disturbed at it; *Serm.*  
as if St. Paul's Wish was an inimitable *XV.*

Flight of Affection: Whose Example  
herein, if a Christian *can in no Case* fol-  
low, he may be apt to accuse himself  
of want of Charity; and yet to follow it  
in any Case, seems terrible even to the  
strongest Affection, and shocking even to  
the most fervent Zeal. For though for a  
good Man, as the same Apostle elsewhere  
expresses himself, one would even dare to  
die; yet for a Man, upon any possible ac-  
count whatsoever, to be content to be-  
come subject to the *Curse of God*, and to  
his *final Displeasure*; this seems beyond the  
utmost Bounds even of Christian Charity  
itself, either to desire, or to be ever ca-  
pable of being prevailed with to submit  
to. 'Tis certain therefore, that the Mean-  
ing of the Apostle has been misunder-  
stood, and that his Intention in this Pas-  
sage, was not to wish himself subject to  
the *eternal Wrath of God*, (which is absurd  
and impossible:) But, the wishing him-  
self *accursed from Christ* for the sake of his  
own Nation and People, is to wish, that,  
if it were possible, he, by bearing *himself*  
those temporal Judgments, which he saw  
were coming upon *Them* on account of  
their being *accursed from Christ*, through  
their Obstinacy and Incredulity, might  
restore them again to the Favour of God,



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W

and reinstate them in the Privileges of his peculiar People. *I could wish that MYSELF were accursed from Christ, for my Brethren my Kinsmen according to the Flesh.* So far (says he) am I from bearing any Hatred or Ill-will to my own Nation the Jews, that on the contrary I could willingly suffer all the Calamities in the World in their stead, if thereby I could prevent their Rejection, and their being *accursed from Christ*. And this high Expression of his Zeal and Concern for his own Nation in the *Beginning* of his Discourse, is an undeniable *Demonstration*, that the *whole Argument itself*, which follows in this Chapter, does not at all relate to any imaginary Predestination of *particular* Persons to *eternal Happiness* or *Misery*; but that it wholly belongs to the Rejection of the *NATION* of the Jews, for their Infidelity; and the calling in of the *Gentiles*, by the Gospel. For, in *This* Sense, his Apology for himself is very *pertinent* and *apposite*, and *necessary* to be premised in the Introduction of a Discourse, which he foresaw must needs be so extremely ungrateful to the *whole Jewish Nation*. But according to the *Other* Interpretation of the Apostle's Argument, there can *no Sense* at all be made of this *Apology*. For since Predestinate or reprobate Persons, if of such

such he were speaking, were selected *ir-  
respectively* both from among Jews and  
Gentiles; and, *who* the *particular Persons*  
so selected were, could not at all be  
known in this Life; it could not serve a-  
ny imaginable Purpose in such an Argument,  
to premise an Apology concerning his  
great Heaviness and continual Sorrow of  
Heart for the Rejection of his *own Na-  
tion* and Countrymen, the *whole People* of  
the *Jews*.

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XV.

This *latter* therefore, being plainly his  
true Scope and Design; he proceeds at  
the *6th Verse* to show, that there was no  
Injustice, no Breach of Promise in God,  
in rejecting the unbelieving *Jews*, and re-  
ceiving the *Gentiles* in their Room; for  
as much as the very *original* Promise to  
their Father *Abraham*, by which they  
were first intitled to become God's pecu-  
liar People, was not made promiscuously  
to all his Posterity, but to the Children  
of the Promise, the Seed of *Isaac* only.  
Which was from the Beginning a Type  
and plain Prefiguration, that God did not  
principally intend his Promise, to take  
place in *Abraham's* Descendants according  
to the *Flesh*, but in those who by a Faith  
or Fidelity like his, were in a truer and  
higher Sense the Children and Followers  
of

Serm. of that great Father of the Faithful. The  
 XV. Promise of God therefore is not at all  
 made void by this new Dispensation: Nor  
 can I in any wise be charged, says he, *as though I supposed the Word of God had taken none Effect; For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; Neither because they are the Seed of Abraham, are they all Children; But in Isaac shall thy Seed be called; That is, They which are the Children of the Flesh, these are not the Children of God; but the Children of the Promise, are counted for the Seed, &c. 8.* So that, even according to the Original Intent of the Promise made to *Abraham*, Christians of the *Gentiles* who imitated the Faith and moral Obedience of that Patriarch, were more truly his Children, than his unbelieving *Posterity according to the Flesh*.

The same Argument the Apostle further illustrates in the 10th Verse, by a still more eminent Example. For, if, saith he, not only among the Children of *Abraham*, but even among the Posterity of *Isaac* himself, (that Child of the Promise,) God was pleased to continue to make such a Distinction, as to confine the Promise to *Jacob* in Exclusion of *Esau*, even before Either of them was born into the World: Much more may God *Now*, without Injustice, confine his Promise

mise to such only, who, after the Example of *Jacob*, believe in God, and obey his Will in what manner soever it be made known to them, exclusive of those, who continue in their Unbelief, and obstinately reject that only Means of Salvation which God hath proposed to them: Exclusive, (I say) of these, notwithstanding that they be by Descent the Posterity of *Jacob*, and in other Respects equal to them that Believe. And this is the full Meaning of the following Words, *Y. II.*  
*The Children being not yet born, neither having done any Good or Evil; that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto Rebekah, the Elder shall serve the Younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

That *the Purpose of God, according to Election might stand.* The only Difficulty in this Passage is, *What Purpose* of God the Apostle is here speaking of. Many have strongly imagined, that it is his Purpose of choosing some particular Persons unconditionally to eternal Life, and others to eternal Destruction. But the Apostle gives not the least Hint of any such Thing. On the contrary, he explains himself in express Words, that he means God's Purpose of appointing the elder of  
*Isaac's*



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*Isaac's Sons to serve the younger; And This not so much in their Persons, as in their national Posterity: And therefore no Wonder, that God made This Appointment before they were yet born. And the Use or Application the Apostle makes of this Instance, is, to prevent an Objection of the unbelieving Jews; who since they could not deny but, notwithstanding all the Promises made to Abraham and Isaac, yet God might in this Sense, without any Injustice, hate and reject Esau; consequently they could not reasonably charge God with any Unrighteousness, in rejecting in like manner the unbelieving Jews also themselves. What shall we say then? Is there Unrighteousness with God? God forbid, &c. 14.*

And to the same Purpose he urges, in the following Verses, the Instances of what God declared to Moses, and what he did to Pharaoh. If of old God declared to Moses, that he would have Mercy on whom he would have Mercy, and would have Compassion on whom he would have Compassion; that is, would have Compassion on Men in what manner and upon what Conditions he himself judged fit, who is certainly the most proper and the Only unerring Judge: For the same Reason Now also,

so, says the Apostle, neither *is it of him* Serm.  
XV.  
*that willeth nor of him that runneth*, to  
 choose for himself in *what Method* God  
 shall bring Men to Salvation; (as the *un-*  
*believing Jews* would do, by adhering ob-  
 stinately to the *ceremonial Righteousness*  
 of the *Mosaick Law*:) But 'tis of God on-  
 ly, *that sheweth Mercy*; 'tis *His Part* only,  
 to appoint in *what Manner*, to *whom*, and  
 on *what Conditions*, he will shew it. Even  
 in human Judicatures, should an *unskilful*  
*Spectator* take upon him to find Fault with  
 the Sentence of an *Able and Upright Judge*,  
 might not the Judge well express himself  
 in this manner: *I will acquit, whom I see fit*  
*to acquit; and I will condemn, whom I see*  
*fit to condemn*? Meaning, not that he would  
 do it *arbitrarily*, but that, as having Alone  
 the most perfect Knowledge of the Law  
 and of the *Fact*, his Sentence ought not  
 to be questioned by *unskilful Spectators*.

Again: If *old* God always reserved  
 to himself a Liberty of choosing likewise  
 out of incorrigible Offenders, whom he  
 thought fit, to make publick and eminent  
 Examples of his Wrath and Vengeance;  
 as in the Instance of *Pharaoh*, whom God  
 hardned, (just in the same Sense as he is  
 said to have *tempted David*, when by his  
 Permission *Satan* tempted him, 2 *Sam.* xxiv.

I. and

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XV.

i. and *Chron.* xxi. i. God \* hardned *Pharaoh*, I say) not by making or decreeing him to be wicked, (God forbid) but, being wicked and incorrigibly obstinate, God raised him up or supported him in his Power, and deferred destroying him, and by many Tryals made both his *Obstinacy* and his *Punishment* remarkable and conspicuous to the World, that he might shew his Power in him, and that his Name might be declared througout all the Earth. If thus in all former Times, says the Apostle, God always reserved to himself this Power of choos- ing from among incorrigible Offenders, whom he pleased to make publick Exam- ples of his Wrath, as in this Instance of *Pharaoh*: For the same Reason Now also, says he, neither is there any Injustice in God, in choosing to make the impenitent and unbelieving *Jews*, (whom all his Judg- ments hitherto, and all his merciful and gracious Invitations to embrace the Gos-

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\* Thus *Deut.* xxix. 4. When *Moses* intended to ex- postulate with the *Israelites*, and to reprove them in the severest manner, for their *Wilful Obstinacy* and *Ingrati- tude*; he thus expresses it: *Ye have seen all that the Lord did: — Yet the Lord hath not given you tin Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear; unto this Day.* The Sense of these Words of *Moses*, is ex- actly what at this Day is vulgarly expressed by the Term, Graceless.

Gospel, have only *hardned*, instead of bringing them to Repentance;) there is no Injustice in God in making *Them* Examples of his Severity and Wrath, notwithstanding their being the Posterity of *Abraham* according to the Flesh; at the same Time that he resolves to have Mercy upon as many of the *Gentiles*, as shall obey the Call by which he invites them to receive the Gospel.

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Having thus cleared his main Argument, the Apostle proceeds in the 19th Verse to propose an Objection, which he foresaw the *unbelieving* Jews would make against the Doctrine he had been hitherto establishing. *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find Fault? For who hath resisted his Will?* If God resolves to cast us off and destroy us, as he did *Pharaoh*, why doth he yet blame us, for being so rejected; for how can his Will be resisted? To this, He makes a twofold Answer. *First*, by way of general Caution, *ψ. 20, 21.* And *Secondly*, by a particular and direct Reply, *ψ. 22.* and in the Words of the Text. *First*, by way of general Caution, he reproves the Rashness of replying presumptuously against God, *ψ. 20.* *Nay but, O Man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the Thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast*




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*hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour? That is, not that God could originally create one Man unconditionally to eternal Life, and another on Purpose for eternal Misery; for this, if it were possible (as 'tis infinitely impossible) to be true, would yet be nothing at all to the Apostle's Argument concerning the whole Nation of the Jews: But the plain Meaning is (as appears from the express Application of these Passages in the 45th of Isaiah and the 18th of Jeremiah, from whence they are cited;) that God has as much Power and as much Right, to punish or reject one Nation or People, and receive or exalt another, upon what Terms he himself judges to be most fit and reasonable; as the Potter has, to form and mould his Clay, first into one Shape, and then into another. But Secondly, the Apostle answers further to the fore-mentioned Objection, by a particular and direct Reply; that the rejected Jews had no Reason at all to murmur against the Power and Will of God; for that though it was indeed his absolute Will and uncontrollable Power, to punish them when and in what manner he thought fit; yet it was Their own obstinacy and impenitency only, that made them*

them liable to be so rejected and punished at all. Ver. 22. *What if God, willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured WITH MUCH LONG-SUFFERING the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction?* The Words *with much long-suffering*, prove very clearly, that even the rejected *Vessels of Wrath* themselves were not destroyed, till God had first long waited even for their Repentance and Amendment; which evidently shows, it was not before determined to be impossible. And then he adds in the Words of the Text: *And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory; Even US whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.* The *Vessels of Mercy* therefore, are not particular Persons chosen irrespectively, but *Us*, whom he has called, that is, the whole Body of Christians in Opposition to the whole Nation of the rejected unbelieving Jews. Which is also further evident from the Application he makes in the following Verse, of the Words of the Prophet: *And he saith also in Osee, I will call them my People, which were not my People, and her beloved, which was not beloved: and it shall come to pass, that in the Place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my People, there shall they be called the*

Serm. *Children of the Living God.* And still more

XV. clearly, if possible, from the manner of his  
 summing up the whole Argument, v. 30.

*What shall we say then? that the Gentiles which followed not after Righteousness, have attained to Righteousness, even the Righteousness which is of Faith: But Israel which followed after the Law of Righteousness, hath not attained to the Law of Righteousness: Wherefore? Because they sought it not by Faith, (that is, by embracing the Gospel) but as it were by the Works of the Mosaick Law.* All which he goes on yet further to explain and illustrate, in the whole 10th and 11th Chapters following. Which are so plain, that they need no Interpretation.

From what has been said, we may draw the two following practical Observations.

1<sup>st</sup>, Such pious Persons, as are apt to be disturbed with melancholy Apprehensions concerning their own State; fearing that after all their sincerest and most earnest Endeavours to obey the Will of God by a Life of Virtue and true Holiness, they may yet possibly not be of the Number of those *Vessels of Mercy, whom he has afore prepared unto Glory*: Such Persons,  
 I say,

I say, may have their Doubts removed, by considering, that all those Passages of Scripture, from which some have earnestly endeavour'd to establish the Doctrine of absolute and unconditionate Decrees, do upon a careful Consideration appear to have been greatly misinterpreted; and that by the Vessels of Mercy, whom God had afore prepared unto Glory, St. Paul plainly means, not particular Persons chosen irrespectively out of the Bulk of Mankind, but the whole Body of Christians, the universal Church of Christ, in Opposition to the whole People or Nation of the Jews. The Election (the chosen People) have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

2dly, On the other Hand, such as are apt to be presumptuous, and think themselves secure in the bare Profession of Christianity, upon account of the whole Body of Christians being styled in Scripture, the Elect, the Election, Vessels of Mercy, and the like: These ought to take Notice, that in like manner as St. Paul, out of the Prophet *Isaiah*, observes that when the whole Nation of the Jews were the chosen and peculiar People of God, yet out of them a Remnant only were to be finally saved; So Now also, though the whole Body of Christians, upon



Serm. account of God's gracious Offers of Mer-  
 XV. cy to them in Christ, are styl'd in Scrip-  
 ture *the election of Grace*; yet Those only  
 who live worthy of so excellent a Pro-  
 fession, by the Practice of true Virtue,  
 Righteousness and Holiness, shall finally  
 be made Partakers of the Benefit thereof.  
 For, as Christ *chose*, (the Word in the  
 Original is, *elected*) twelve Disciples, and  
 yet one of them proved a Devil and the  
 Son of Perdition; so, notwithstanding  
 that all Christians are the *Vessels of*  
*Mercy, prepared of God afore unto Glory*;  
 yet if any Man *draws back*, he shall lose  
 the Benefit of that Preparation, and God  
 will no longer have *any Pleasure in him*;  
 that is, he shall finally be rejected, and  
 not be made Partaker of the Salvation of  
 the Gospel.

A SER-

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A  
SERMON

Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
OF

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, Feb. 2, 1723.

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LUKE XVI. 12.

*And if ye have not been faithful in That  
which is Another man's, who shall give  
you That which is your own?*

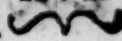
THESE Words are the Conclusion of a Parable, in which our Lord shows us, that the Men of Serm.  
XVI.  
*This World* are generally more diligent, more skilful, and more true to their own Interest, in the Pursuit of their worldly

Serm.

XVI.

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Designs, than Men who have the Knowledge of the *True Religion*, and of the Happiness of the *Life to come*, are in securing to themselves a Portion in That *eternal State*. And thence he exhorts his Disciples, to learn Wisdom in this *Particular*, even from *vitious* and *corrupt* Men, to learn, even from their Behaviour, to make the best Improvement of the Advantages they have in their Hands, and be as diligent in making Provision for the Time to come, in Matters of eternal Concern, as others are in temporal. The Case he puts by way of Similitude, is that of a *Steward*, who having embezzled his Lord's Goods, and finding he should thereupon be removed from his Place, deliberates with himself what Course he had best to take for his future Subsistence. To *dig*, or earn his Bread by the Labour of his Hands, was what he had never been brought up to; to *beg*, he was ashamed. What he at last resolved upon, was to do at present some considerable Acts of Generosity to several of his Lord's Debtors; that afterwards, when he came to be discharged from his Place, he might find some Support in the Returns of their Gratitude: *Ver. 4. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the Stewardship, they may receive me into their Houses.* Accordingly sending for his Lord's Debtors,

tors, he immediately *remits* to each of Serm.  
 them a considerable Proportion of their XVI.  
 Debt. Whether we are to suppose he   
 did this *fraudulently*, in further Wrong to  
 his Lord, or whether he did it *with Ju-*  
*stice*, out of his own present Substance,  
 is not material to the Intent of the Para-  
 ble. What our Saviour *observes* upon it,  
 is this only, that his *Lord commended him*,  
 ✱ 8. *because he had done wisely* : He com-  
 mended his *Worldly Wisdom*, in securing  
 to himself Friends against the Day of Ad-  
 versity. And the Application our Lord  
 makes of it, is *This* : That, what All  
 Men, both Just and Unjust, acknowledge  
 to be the great Instance of Wisdom in  
*Temporal* Affairs, the making Provision  
 beforehand against a Time of Necessity;  
 is really much more so, with regard to  
*Things Eternal*. But in Fact, 'tis in this  
*latter Case* much more rarely put in *Prac-*  
*tice* : For the *Children of this World*, says  
 he, *are in their Generation wiser than the*  
*Children of Light*. This Observation con-  
 tains an affectionate *Reproof* of the *Remiss-*  
*ness* of Christians, in not being sufficient-  
 ly solicitous about their future and *final*  
 Interest : And there is included in it an  
 earnest *Admonition to them*, to learn from  
 the Example even of an *unrighteous* World,  
 to be true to their Principles, and to be as



Serm. XVI. *Wise in attending to their own Advan-  
tages, as worldly Men are to Theirs. Learn,*  
*W**says he, even from the Similitude of the*  
*Unjust Steward, to lay up for yourselves a*  
*Treasure against the Time to come, to secure*  
*to yourselves a Refuge against the Day of*  
*Trial. Make to yourselves Friends of the*  
*Mammon of Unrighteousness; that when ye*  
*fail, they may receive you into everlasting Ha-*  
*bitations. He that is faithful in that which*  
*is least, is faithful also in much; and he that*  
*is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.*  
*If therefore you have not been faithful in the*  
*unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to*  
*your Trust the true Riches? And if ye have*  
*not been faithful in That which is Another*  
*Man's, who shall give you that which is your*  
*own? There is some little Obscurity in*  
*the Words, arising from the manner of*  
*Expression; especially in that latter part of*  
*them, which are the Words of my Text.*  
*But if we carefully consider their True*  
*Sense, they will appear to contain the*  
*clearest Reasoning, and the strongest and*  
*most noble Argument in the World.*

In the *first* Place 'tis to be observed,  
that the Words, *unrighteous Mammon*,  
with which our Lord here exhorts his  
Disciples to make to themselves Friends;  
do not signify Riches *UNJUSTLY* got-  
ten,

ten, Riches which Men have no *RIGHT* Sermon.  
 at all to possess, but which they have no *XVI.*  
 lasting, no certain, no secure and permanent  
 Right to; no Right of Perpetuity of Enjoy-  
 ment. For they are expressly opposed, not  
 as unjust or ill-gotten, to just or well-gotten  
 Riches; but as false and deceitful, they are  
 here opposed to the True Riches, and as  
 insecure transitory Possessions, to Everlast-  
 ing Habitations.

In the Next Place 'tis to be observed;  
 that the Words, *He that is faithful in that  
 which is LEAST, is faithful also in MUCH,*  
 are a Comparison between the present  
 Life, and the future. *He*, and *He only*,  
 who in the State of Tryal Here, shows his  
*Fidelity* in a *Small Trust*, shall Hereafter  
 have intrusted to him an unspeakable *Lar-*  
*ger* and *more permanent Possession*. Thus  
 our Lord explains himself in the Parable  
 of the Talents, *Matt. xxv. 21. Well done,*  
*thou good and faithful Servant; thou hast*  
*been faithful over a few Things, I will make*  
*thee Ruler over many Things; Enter thou in-*  
*to the Joy of thy Lord.* Or, as he expres-  
 ses it in *Luke xix. 17. Well, thou good Ser-*  
*vant, because thou hast been faithful in a*  
*very little, have thou Authority over Ten*  
*Cities.*

Lastly

Serm.

XVI.

Lastly, 'tis to be observ'd (which indeed is the principal Difficulty in the Text;) that the Words, *Who shall give you That which is your Own?* do not signify, that which is already your own, but that which is to be; that which, when once given you, *WILL* be your own for a perpetual and unalienable Possession. If ye have not been faithful in that which is another Man's, in that which you knew was only a *Trust* committed to you, and committed to you only for a very short Time; how then can you be fit to be intrusted with a Possession for Perpetuity? If in a Matter wherein you knew you must be called to account, and knew not every Day but the very next might be the Day of accounting, you have still ventured presumptuously to be unfaithful; how are ye fit to be intrusted with Power and a KINGDOM, with Power in your Own Property, with a Possession secure and of unchangeable Duration?

Thus the Sense of our Lord in this whole Discourse, is exceeding clear; and the Argument on which he builds his Admonition, strong and affectionate. Learn, says he, one part of true Wisdom, even from worldly, even from unrighteous Men. The unjust

*unjust Steward* in the *Parable*, foreseeing he should not long possess his Stewardship, had Wisdom enough to make *some sort of Provision* for himself, against the Day of Adversity. Ye also, says our Lord, are *Stewards*, entrusted with a small Treasure, for a very uncertain, but certainly very short Time. *This Treasure*, to which you have no *lasting Right*, no *continuing Title*, make to yourselves Friends with it, *Now*. Employ it in such a Manner, in Things innocent and virtuous, in Ways just and righteous, in Works useful and charitable; that *hereafter*, when this *transitory Life* shall fail, ye may be found worthy to be *received into everlasting Habitations*. To obtain a Portion in those *everlasting Habitations*, there is no other possible way, but by being found faithful in this *Temporary Trial*. For *He that is faithful in little*, may reasonably be depended upon, that he will be *faithful also in much*: But *He that is unjust in the least Thing*, can with no Reason expect to be trusted with what is *Greater*. If therefore, says our Lord, ye be *not faithful* in a Trust of so short Continuance, as the present Time is, how are ye fit to have committed to you the *True and Eternal Riches*? And if ye be *not faithful in That which is another's*, and for which ye are accountable every



Serm. every Moment, how is it fit ye should  
 XVI. be trusted with a *permanent* Treasure, a  
 ~~~~~ Treasure to continue in your own Pow-  
 er, in your own proper and *unalienable*
Possession?

Having thus at large explained the
Words, and illustrated the *Argument* used
 by our Lord in the Text; it remains that
 I deduce from thence some *Doctrinal* Ob-
 servations, which may be of Use to us in
Practice. And

1st, 'Tis obvious to observe, that what
 our Lord here argues, both in the Para-
 ble and in the Application of it, with re-
 gard to the use of Riches in particular,
 is equally applicable, and intended to be
 applied to *every other* Advantage or Abi-
 lity whatsoever. *Authority, Honour, Pow-
 er, Knowledge; every Opportunity in Life,*
of having Influence upon Men, may, as
 well as Riches, be either made use of to
 the Glory of God, and the promoting of
 Virtue; or may be abused to Other, and
 Contrary Purposes. The *Ground* of our
 Lord's Exhortation in the Text, is the
same with regard to *all* these Things, and
 may, with *equal Reason*, be applied to
 them *all*. They are *all of them*, in the
present Life, of very short, *all of them* of
 equally

equally uncertain Continuance. They are *all of them* committed to us, as to *Stewards* during Pleasure; *all of them*, what we are *accountable for*, every Moment. What have we then to do, according to *any Measures of Wisdom and Prudence*, but to employ all these Things faithfully to *such Purposes here* in this *transitory Life*, as may hereafter be a Foundation for our being *received into everlasting Habitations*? For if, in the use of *any* of these Abilities, we be not at present *faithful in That which is another's*; in That which Now for a *short time only*, is committed to us upon *Trust*, and upon *Account*, from *Another*: How can we reasonably expect to have them hereafter *given* to us for *Our Own*, for an unalienable and everlasting Possession?

2dly, A *Second Doctrinal Observation* arising from our Saviour's Argument in the Text, is, that the *present Life* is a *Trial of Mens Fidelity*, a *Probation* of their *Fitness* for a *future and more lasting State*. He that is *faithful in that which is Least*, is *faithful also in Much*; and He that is *unjust in the least*, is *unjust also in Much*. If therefore, (says he) ye be not *faithful in a Temporary Trust*, Who shall think fit to give you an *Eternal Inheritance*? What *Moses* said

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XVI.

W

said to the *Israelites* concerning their Passage through the Wilderness to the Promised Land, *Deut. viii. 2.* is exactly parallel to the present Case. *Thou shalt remember all the Way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty Years in the Wilderness, to humble thee, and to PROVE thee, to KNOW what was in thine Heart, whether thou would'st keep his Commandments, or no.* The Meaning is, not, that God wants Information, or tries Men with regard to Himself, who knoweth all Things: But with regard to Them, he proves and exercises their *Virtue*; the *Habits* of which, essentially and in the Nature of Things, are produced and improved no otherwise than by *Acts*. In the Fabrick of the Natural and Material World, every Thing is, by the Necessity of its Nature, exactly and invariably what the Creator made it: Nor can any of *These Things* possibly, by any Power of Nature, either improve or destroy their own originally implanted Perfections. But in the Moral World, of intelligent and rational Creatures, the Case is just the reverse. The very Essence of Virtue consists, in being *freely chosen*. And had not God so constituted *Moral Agents*, as to make their Goodness or Badness depend upon the Habits they should acquire by their own *free Acts*; he had in the very Act of Creation destroyed his own Design,

sign, and had not made them at all *Moral Serm.*
Agents. Consequently, (which is the *noblest* XVI.
Part of the Idea of God,) he had neither
been *King* nor *Judge* nor *Governour* of the
World, but merely as an *Artificer* of a
Great Machine. A *Machine*, in the *Fabrick*
of which, he *has* indeed displayed, by an
infinite Variety of the most surprizing
Effects, *Wisdom unfathomable*, and *Power*
inexhaustible. But 'tis all merely for the
Sake of the *Inhabitants*, whom he has
placed therein, capable of contemplating
this divine Workmanship. For other-
wise, the whole *Fabrick* of the Earth and
Heavens, beautiful, great, and glorious
as it is, is yet *in itself*, (being lifeless, void
of all Sense and Knowledge, and not so
much as conscious of its own Existence,)
less valuable than the meanest single Ani-
mal in the Universe. And *together with*
an infinite Variety of Creatures indued
merely with *Life*, *Sense*, and *Motion*; 'tis
still comparatively as Nothing; 'tis still
really of less Value, than *one Rational, In-*
telligent, Free, Moral Agent, capable of
Knowing, capable of Contemplating and
Acknowledging, capable of Imitating, in
its Degree and Measure, the Perfections
of its Great Creator. For the Sake of
These therefore, the World was created.
And these God cannot but govern in ways
suitable to their Nature, as he governs the

Serm. *material* World in a way suitable to its Na-
 XVI. ture. *These* he cannot but dispose into dif-
 ferent Stations, proportionable to their
moral Capacities and Improvements; in like
 manner as, in the *natural* World, he has
 adjusted every Thing in *Weight and Mea-*
sure. In the *One* appears the Skill and
 Wisdom of an All-powerful *Artificer*: In
 the *Other alone* appears the Glory and Ma-
 jesty of a Supreme *King*, and the Righte-
 ousness of an All-seeing and unerring
Judge. This is the manifest Voice of
Nature and Reason; and this is the express
 and constant Declaration of *Scripture*. All
 Sorts of *Abilities, Powers, and Capacities*
whatsoever, wherewith God has at *present*
 indued Men; *Riches, Honour, Authority,*
Wisdom, Knowledge, and the like, are by
 our Saviour, in his Parable of the *Talents*,
 represented as so many particular *Trusts*,
 committed to Mens Charge in this World,
 as *Tryals* of their *Fidelity*, in way of *Pro-*
bation of their *Fitness* for a *Better* and
more Lasting State. They who employ
 not these *Abilities* to *Virtuous* Purposes,
 in promoting *Truth* and *Righteousness* in
 the World, are the *wicked and slothful*
Servant, to whom his Lord said, *Thou*
oughtest to have put my Money to the Ex-
changers, and then at my coming I should
have received mine own with Usury: Take
therefore

therefore the Talent from him; ——— and Serm. XVI.
 cast ye the unprofitable Servant into outer
 Darknes, there shall be weeping and gnashing
 of Teeth, Matt. xxv. 27. On the contra-
 ry: They who, according to their re-
 spective Abilities, employ the different
 Powers (whatsoever they be) wherewith
 God has intrusted them, in promoting
 the Glory of God, and the Practice of Vir-
 tue in the World: These are the Ser-
 vants, who, in trading with five Talents,
 having gained five more; and with two
 Talents, having gained other two; their
 Lord said to each of them in his Propor-
 tion: *Well done, thou good and faithful Ser-
 vant, thou hast been faithful over a Few
 Things, I will make thee Ruler over Many
 Things: Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*
 In the Language of my Text: *Thou hast
 been faithful in That which is another Man's,*
 in that small and short Trust which I
 committed to thy Charge; I will now
 therefore give thee a Possession, which
 shall be in Property *thy own*, thy own for
 an unalienable and everlasting Inheritance.
 In the 24th ch. of St. Matthew, v. 42. our
 Lord expresses the same Thing still more
 strongly: *Watch therefore, says he, and—
 ——— be ye also ready; for in such an Hour
 as you think not, the Son of Man cometh.*
Who then is a faithful and wise Servant,

A a

whom

Serm.

KVI.

whom his Lord has made Ruler over his Household, to give them Meat in due Season? Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing: Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him Ruler over all his Goods. 'Tis in Allusion to this Notion, of the present Life being a Tryal of Mens Fidelity, or of their Fitness for a better State, that St. Paul, when the End of his Days drew near, declares concerning himself, 2 Tim. iv. 7. *I have fought a good Fight, — I have kept the Faith;* (I have preserved my Fidelity, or shewn my self Faithful in my Trust:) Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness. And in the former Part of his Life, describing his Care in the Government of himself and of his own Passions, 1 Cor. ix. 27. *I keep under my Body,* says he, *and bring it into Subjection;* lest that by any Means, when I have preached to others, I my self should be a Cast-away: In the Original it is, *I my self should be ἀσχυρὸς*, found Not Proof; not Proof against the Temptations of the present World; not meet for the USE, for the Employment, for the Station intended me in the Life to come. For, (as he in another Place expresses this Matter by a most apt Similitude,) in a great House there are, says he, not only Vessels of Gold and of Silver,

ver, but also of Wood and of Earth; and some to Honour, and some to Dishonour. If a Man therefore purge himself from these, (from ungodly Works and Doctrines mentioned in the former Part of the Chapter) he shall be a Vessel unto Honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's Use, and prepared unto every good Work. Serm. XVI.

The Principal Method, in which the unsearchable Wisdom of God has most frequently been pleased to try the Fidelity of his Best and most eminent Servants, has been by Afflictions and Persecutions of various kinds: Proving them, whether in Case of Competition, they would steadfastly prefer the Interest of Truth and Virtue, in Opposition to all the Advantages, and to all the Sufferings too of this present Life. Whosoever (says our Lord) does not bear his Cross, and come after me, cannot be my Disciple, Luke xiv. 27. And hence it is, that in Scripture we so frequently find the Tryal of Mens Fidelity compared to the purifying and trying of Metals by Fire. Many shall be purified and made white, and tried, Dan. xii. 10. And they that understand among the People, shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the Sword and by Flame, by Captivity and by Spoil: Dan. xl. 33
And some of them of Understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white.

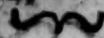
Serm. *white.* Thus again, *Is. lxviii. 10. Behold, I*
XVI. *have refined thee, but not with Silver; I have*
chosen thee in the Furnace of Affliction. I will
Zech. xiii. refine them, as Silver is refined; and will try
9. them, as Gold is tryed. And Job xxiii. 10.
He knoweth the Way that I take: When he
has tried me, I shall come forth as Gold. The
Later Writers of the Books of Wisdom
and Ecclesiasticus, apply the same Simili-
tude with great Justness of Thought, and
Eloquence of Expression. Gold is tried in
Eccles. ii. the Fire, and acceptable Men in the Furnace
5. of Adversity. The Souls of the Righteous are
Wisd. iii. in the Hand of God, and there shall no Tor-
5. ment touch them. Having been a little chas-
tised, they shall be greatly rewarded; for God
PROVED them, and found them worthy
for Himself. As Gold in the Furnace has be
tryed them, and received them as a Burnt-Of-
fering. In the New Testament, the same
Figure of speaking is continued in the same
Sense. Our Saviour, in his Exhortation
to the Christian Church in that Period of
Time, which is represented by the Church
of Smyrna: Behold, (says he) the Devil (the
Spirit of false Accusation) shall cast some
of you into Prison, that ye may be TRYED:
——But be thou faithful unto Death, and
I will give thee a Crown of Life, Rev. ii. 10.
And at another Time: Because (says he)
th. iii. 10. thou hast kept the Word of my Patience, I
also will keep thee from (or carry thee safely
through

through) the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the World, to TRY them that dwell upon the Earth.—— Him that overcometh, (that is; who shall be found Faithful in that Hour of Tryal, notwithstanding all the Allurements and all the Terrors of an unrighteous World; Him) will I make a PILLAR in the Temple of my God: A PILLAR, or eminent Part, of That Living Temple of God, of which the Twelve Apostles are (by a most beautiful and expressive Metaphor) represented as being the * twelve Foundation-Stones, or * Rev. xxi. * Rocks on which it is built; and Jesus 14 & Mat. xvi. 18. Christ himself the Chief Corner-Stone, by which the whole Building is compact together. With a View to These and the like Promises it is, that St. James declares: *Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation; for when he is TRYED, he shall receive the Crown of Life.* And St. Peter: *That the TRYAL* (saith he) *of your Faith,* (of your Fidelity or Faithfulness,) *being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tryed with Fire, might be found unto Praise and Honour and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

3dly, A Third doctrinal Observation, obviously arising from the foregoing, and of great Use in Practice, is this. If the present Life is a Tryal of Mens Fidelity,

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a Probation of their Fitness for a Future and more Lasting State, then every *erroneous Notion*, which is of such a Nature, as leads Men to rely upon any *Equivalent* whatsoever, instead of employing *faithfully* those Talents, wherewith God has intrusted them, in promoting his Kingdom of *Truth* and *Righteousness*, must needs be a *Fatal Deceit*. If Men content themselves barely with a *zealous Profession* of the *true Religion*, and a diligent avoiding of all *false Opinions* in *Speculation*: If they rely entirely upon a regular Observance of those merely *External Duties* of Religion, which were appointed of God as Obligations and Assistances to True Virtue: If they satisfy themselves with that *Sorrow for Sin*, and *Fear of Punishment* upon the Approach of Eternity, which is vulgarly called a *Death-bed-Repentance*: If they depend upon any *absolute Decree* of God, or upon any Application of the *Merits* of *Christ*, to save them, not *from*, but *in* their *Sins*: If they expect to be saved by their *Faith*, meaning thereby mere *Credulity*, instead of *Fidelity* or *acting Faithfully* upon the Principles they profess: In these and all other Cases whatsoever, which can possibly be reconciled with *vitious* and *immortal* Practice; our Saviour will say unto them, *Depart from me, all ye Workers of Iniquity*. For if ye have not
been

been Faithful in a small and temporary Trust, Sermon.
 how is it fit I should give you a Kingdom XVI.
 to be your Own for ever ?

4thly, and Lastly : From what has been said, it appears, that the principal Difference of Men, in God's Estimation, consists not so much in the Number of the Talents committed to them, as in the Degree of their Fidelity, or the good Use they make of them. For, *Many that are First shall be Last, and the Last First.* And to him who with two Talents gained two more, as well as to him who with ten Talents gained other ten, our Lord says ;
 " Well done, thou good and faithful
 " Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy
 " Lord : For he that is Faithful in *Little*,
 " is Faithful also in *Much* : Wherefore
 " since thou hast been Faithful in that
 " which is *another Man's*, in that short
 " and small Trust which I committed to
 " thy Charge, I will therefore give thee
 " a Treasure and Inheritance which shall
 " be thine *Own*, thine *Own* for an unalienable and everlasting Possession."

A
SERMON

Preach'd in the
PARISH-CHURCH
OF
St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, Feb. 16, 1723.

LUKE XVII. 37.

*And they answered and said unto him :
Where, Lord ? And he said unto them,
Wheresoever the Body is, thither will the
Eagles be gathered together.*

THESE Words are a Proverbial Serm.
Saying, used by our Lord upon XVII.
two different Occasions. Once
in This Place, upon occasion of the Pha-
risees demanding of him, *ψ.* 20. **WHEN**
the

Serm. *the Kingdom of God should come.* And a-
 XVII. gain in the 24th of St. Matthew, upon
 ~~~~~ occasion of his Disciples asking him,  
*WHEN shall these Things be? and what  
 shall be the Sign of thy coming and of the End  
 of the World?* In this Latter Place, our  
 Lord, in answer to the Question put to  
 him by his Disciples, gives them a large  
 Prophetick Description of the Destruction  
 of the City and Nation of the Jews,  
 by the Power of the *Romans*; and a long  
 Series of *other Events*, which were to be  
 accomplished before his coming to Judg-  
 ment. And because he is very particular  
 and distinct in *that Part* of the Prophecy,  
 which relates to the Destruction of *Je-  
 rusalem* by the *Romans*, whose Armies car-  
 ried an *Eagle* for their Ensign; therefore  
 the generality of Expositors have under-  
 stood the Meaning of the Words of my  
 Text to be, that *wheresoever the Jews were,*  
*thither would the Roman Armies be gather-*  
*ed together to destroy them.* But *this Sense*  
 of the Words seems low, and the *Allusion*  
 to be *far-fetched*; and the Application of  
 them too much *confined*, and their Con-  
 nexion in the whole Discourse very diffi-  
 cult to be made out. For our Lord, in  
 the Place where these Words come in,  
 in St. Matthew's Gospel, as well as in that  
 of St. Luke, is not speaking of the *Ro-*  
*mans*

*mans* destroying the *Jews*; (for *that Part* of his *Prophecy* he had *finished*, several *Verses* before:) But he is speaking, in *One* of these *Places*, concerning the Unreasonableness of *looking for Christ's Coming* in any *particular Part* of the *World*, in the *Desert*, or in the *Secret Chambers*, or in any *One Place* rather than another. And in the *Other Place*, he is speaking concerning the *righteous Judgment of God*, distinguishing *Persons* from each other in the *Highest Degree*, between whom in all *worldly Appearance* there was *No Distinction*. The true Sense therefore of the *Words of the Text*, must be gathered, not from any *remote Allusion*, in the single *Word Eagles*, but from the *immediate Connexion* of the *intire Sentence*, in the *Discourse* wherein it is joined, and from the *natural Signification* of the whole *Proverbial Saying*, considered as *Proverbial*.

There are several *Instances* in *Scripture*, of *Other Proverbial Sayings*, inserted in like *Manner* as *This* in the *Text*; very usual at the *Time*, and in the *Language*, wherein they were spoken; so as to be as easily and as perfectly understood by the *Vulgar*, as the most literal *Expressions* whatsoever. Thus *Ezek. xviii. 2.*  
*The Fathers have eaten sowre Grapes, and*  
*the*



Serm. *the Childrens Teeth are set on Edge*: There  
 XVII. was no Man among the Jews, even of  
 the meanest Capacity, but at first hearing  
 understood those Words to mean, that  
*the Children were punished for the Trans-*  
*gressions of their Fore-Fathers.* Thus when  
 St. Paul tells us, that *Whatsoever a Man*  
*soweth, That shall he also reap,* Gal. vi. 7,  
 Every even the lowest Understanding  
 immediately apprehends them to mean,  
 that, according to Mens Behaviour Here,  
 whether virtuous or vitious, so shall their  
 Reward be, or their Punishment, hereaf-  
 ter. Again: When our Lord says, *Matt.*  
*vii. 16. Men do not gather Grapes of Thorns,*  
*or Figs of Thistles;* his Sense is no less ob-  
 vious, and his Words even more expre-  
 sive, than if he had said directly, that  
 virtuous Actions cannot reasonably be ex-  
 pected to flow from corrupt Principles,  
 or from vitious and debauched Minds.  
 The *Proverbial Expression* in my Text, be-  
 ing founded upon a Similitude *less common*  
 in our *modern Language*, than these be-  
 fore-mentioned; the Sense of it, for that  
 Reason, does not to an *English Reader*, at  
 first Sight, appear so obvious. But with  
 a little Attention to the general Nature  
 of Proverbial Sayings, it is very easy to  
 be understood. The Nature of a Proverb  
 is, to contain in one single Sentence a  
 Simi-

Similitude, or Comparifon of two Things with each other; and, under the Instance of fome one particular Example, to conclude fome more General or Univerfal Truth. This is evidently the Cafe, in the other Inftances I produced: And fo it is likewise in This Expreflion in my Text. *Wherefoever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together. Wherefoever the Prey is, thither will the BIRDS of Prey flock towards it. Wherefoever the Cafe is the fame, (whatfoever be the Subject fpoken of;) there alfo the general Obfervation upon the Cafe, (whatfoever that Obfervation be) will have the fame Juftnefs and Truth. Wherefoever the State of Things is the fame, and the Circumftances alike, there alfo will the Event, in any Place, or at any Time be proportionally alike.*

This is plainly the Senfe of the Words, as it arifes from the Confideration of the general Nature of a Proverbial Expreflion. And from the Confideration of the particular Connexion of the Words with thofe immediately foregoing, in Each of the Paflages in the two Gospels where the fame Words occur; it ftill more evidently appears to be the True Senfe of them. In the 24th Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel,

Serm.  
XVII.  
W

ver. 3.

Mar.xiii.7.  
Luke xxi.  
24.

Matt.xxiv.  
7.

pel, (and the same Thing is recorded likewise in the 13th of St. Mark, and in the 21st of St. Luke,) the Disciples had asked our Lord, *WHEN shall these Things be?* When shall all these Things come to pass, which thou hast so often foretold to us? *And what shall be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the End of the World?* The Ground of their Question was, that, upon the Dissolution of the Jewish State and Government, which he had told them was approaching, they expected the *Kingdom of Christ* should immediately be set up, in some remarkable manner, in some particular Place. In Answer to their Question, and in order to rectify this their Mistake, our Lord tells them, that not only the City and Temple of Jerusalem should be destroyed, and the Jewish Nation dispersed, but that, after This, there should still succeed a long Train of Calamities, and the *End* should not be yet. For *Jerusalem* should be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And, during that long Period of Time, in Other Parts of the World likewise, Nation should rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and there should be Famines and Pestilences and Earthquakes in divers Places. And that even all these Calamities, comparatively speaking, should be

be but the *Beginning of Sorrows*. For, a *Serm.*  
*Deluge of Corruption and Iniquity should* XVII.  
*overspread the World. And there should*  
*be very great and very long Persecutions :* *ver. 12.*  
*And a Time of Tribulation, such as had*  
*not been since the Beginning of the World.* *ver. 21.*  
*And that during this Time, the Gospel*  
*should be preached in all the World, for a* *ver. 14.*  
*Witness unto all Nations. And his Con-*  
*clusion of the whole, is: That therefore his*  
*Disciples ought not to look for the King-*  
*dom of Christ, as a Dominion to be set*  
*up at any particular Time or Place : But*  
*in all Times, and at all Places alike, where-*  
*soever and whensoever the Doctrine of*  
*Christ is received and practised, where*  
*soever and whensoever any Number of sin-*  
*cere Believers (whether Many or Few) be*  
*gathered together in His Name, There (says*  
*he) is the Kingdom of Christ. Ver.*  
*23. If any Man shall say unto you, Lo, Here*  
*is Christ, or There; believe it not. For there*  
*shall arise False Christs and False Prophets,*  
*and shall shew great Signs and Wonders.—*  
*Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore,*  
*if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in*  
*the Desert, go not forth : Behold, he is in*  
*the secret Chambers; believe it not. For as*  
*the Lightning cometh out of the East, and shin-*  
*eth even unto the West; so shall also the Com-*  
*ing of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever*  
*the Carcase is, there will the Eagles be ga-*  
*thered*



Serm. *thered together.* The Sense evidently is  
 XVII. This. As, in all Places equally, and at  
 all Times, wheresoever the Lightning  
 is, there does the Light of it shine forth;  
 and wheresoever the Prey is, thither do  
 the Birds of Prey resort: So, at what  
 Time or Place soever the Doctrine of  
 Christ is received, and practised accord-  
 ing to His Directions, there is the *King-  
 dom of Christ.*

In the other Passage, where the same  
 Words are again repeated, (which is,  
*Luke xvii. 37.* the Words of my Text)  
 there likewise their Connexion in the  
 Thread of our Lord's Discourse, clear-  
 ly shows them to have the like Signifi-  
 cation. The manner in which they are  
 there introduced, is this, Ver. 20. *And  
 when he was demanded of the Pharisees,  
 WHEN the Kingdom of God should come;  
 he answered them, and said: The King-  
 dom of God cometh not with Observation.  
 Neither shall they say, Lo Here, or Lo  
 There: For, behold, the Kingdom of God  
 is Within (or Among) you. And he said  
 unto his Disciples; The Days will come,  
 when——they shall say unto you, See  
 here, or see there; Go not after them,  
 nor follow them.* That is: Think not that  
 the

the Kingdom of Christ is to be distinguished under the Character of any particular Time or Place, or to be known by any External Notes or Marks; But understand, that it is in all Places and at all Times the same; distinguished always and every where alike, by its own intrinsic Essence only; just as the Shining of Lightning is one and the same, from one End of Heaven to the other. After which he proceeds to warn them, *ŷ. 26.* that as, in the Days of *Noah*, and in the Days of *Lot*, Men were negligent and secure, having their Thoughts entirely taken up with their present Business; their Ambition, their Covetousness, and their Pleasures; till, on a sudden, the Deluge of Water swept them all away in the *one* Case; and Lightning from Heaven, joined with an Earthquake, destroyed and consumed them in the *other* Case: *Even thus* (says he) *shall it be in the Day when the Son of Man is revealed.* And then he concludes, in the Words preceding my Text, *ŷ. 34.* *I tell you, in that Night there shall be two Men in one Bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two Women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two Men shall be in the Field, the one shall be taken, and the other left.* The Mean-

Serm. ing is: In the righteous and unerring  
 XVII. Judgment of God the Searcher of Hearts,  
 many Persons shall finally be distinguish-  
 ed from each other in the Highest De-  
 gree, between whom in all worldly  
 Appearance there was no Distinction.

*And they said unto him, Where, Lord? And  
 he said unto them, Wheresoever the Body is,  
 thither will the Eagles be gathered together.*

ver. 31.

That is to say: Your Question is of no  
 Moment: 'Tis all one, wheresoever and  
 whensoever the same Thing comes to pass.  
 Difference of Time and Place, makes  
 no Difference at all in God's Account  
 and Estimation, either of Things or  
 Persons. Where-ever the Case is the  
 same, and the Circumstances alike; there  
 also will the Event be proportionably  
 the same. At what Times and in what  
 Places soever, the Persons to be judged  
 shall be found endued with the like  
 Diversity of Qualifications; there also  
 shall the impartial and unerring Judgment  
 of God the Searcher of Hearts, distin-  
 guish them with the like Distinction.

Luke xxi.  
 36.

*Watch ye therefore, (says our Lord) and  
 pray always, that ye may be accounted  
 worthy to escape all these Things that shall  
 come to pass, and to stand before the Son*

Mark xiii.  
 37.

*of Man. And what I say unto you, I say  
 unto all; Watch.*

Having

Having thus fully and at large explained the true Signification of the Words of the Text: The Observations I shall draw from thence, are briefly as follows.

1<sup>st</sup>, That, generally speaking, All the Admonitions and Instructions given by our Saviour to his Disciples at different Times and upon different Occasions, were intended by him to be applied (allowing for particular Differences of Circumstances) to All Christians, at All Times and in All Places. Concerning things recorded in the Old Testament, even from the remotest Times, St. Paul declares, that *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our Learning, that we, through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures, might have Hope*, Rom. xv. 4. When the Scripture tells us, that Abraham's Faith was imputed to him for Righteousness, Gen. xv. 6. Rom. iv. 22. It was not written (says the Apostle) for His Sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for Us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the Dead: That is, if we act with the same Fidelity upon the Principles of our Profession, as

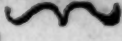


Serm. *He did upon His.* On the other hand,  
 XVII. when we find recorded in Scripture the  
 severe Punishments inflicted upon the  
 Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness; for  
 their repeated Acts of Disobedience; *All*  
*these Things* (says he) *happened unto them*  
*for Examples,* 1 Cor. x. 11. *and they are*  
*written for our Admonition, upon whom the*  
*Ends of the World are come.* Now if this  
 be so, much more may our Saviour's In-  
 structions and Admonitions to his Disciples,  
 be generally understood to be applicable,  
 in Proportion, to All Christians. His  
 Prophetical Warnings do all of them ex-  
 tend even unto the End of the World:  
 And his Directions to his immediate Fol-  
 lowers are usually couched under such  
 Expressions, as were manifestly intended  
 for the Use and Instruction of all interve-  
 ning Ages, untill his coming to Judgment.  
*Where ever two or three* (says he) *are ga-*  
*thered together in my Name,* Matt. xviii.  
 20. *there am I in the midst of them.* Where-  
 soever and whensoever the Doctrine of  
 Christ is received, and practised accord-  
 ing to his Directions, in the Love of  
 Truth, Righteousness and Peace; be it  
 in one Place, in one Age of the World,  
 or in another; be it by many Persons, or  
 by few: There is the Church of Christ:  
 To them belong all the glorious Promises  
 which

which he has ever made to his Church; *Serm.*  
 and to them belong all the Warnings *XVI.*  
 which he has given, or Persecutions to  
 be expected from an unrighteous and cor-  
 rupt World. For this Reason, whoever  
 at any time asked him when the Kingdom  
 should be restored to *Israel*, or when the  
 Kingdom of God should come, and when  
 shall all these things come to pass, and what  
 shall be the Sign of thy coming, and of  
 the End of the World? Instead of men-  
 tioning any particular Time, he constant-  
 ly warned them to watch and to be rea-  
 dy at all times. And at the Conclusion  
 of the Prophecy, whereof my Text is a  
 Part, he in exprefs Words declares, (as  
 'tis recorded by *St. Mark, ch. xiii. 37.*)  
*What I say unto You, I say unto ALL,*  
*Watch.* And at another time, when his Dis-  
 ciples directly asked him, whether he in-  
 tended his Discourse in particular to them,  
 or in general to all Men, *Luke xii. 41.* his  
 Answer is to the very same Purpose. He  
 had been exhorting them, *v. 35. Let your*  
*Loyns be girded about, and your Lights burn-*  
*ing; and ye yourselves like unto Men that*  
*wait for their Lord.*——— *Blessed are those*  
*Servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh,*  
*shall find watching.*——— *And this know,*  
*that if the good man of the House had known*  
*what Hour the Thief would come, he would*  
*have watched, and not have suffered his house*

Serm. to be broken through. Be Ye therefore ready  
 XVII. also; for the Son of Man cometh at an Hour  
 when ye think not. Then Peter said unto  
 him, Lord, speakest thou this Parable un-  
 to Us, or even to all? And the Lord  
 said, Who then is that faithful and wise  
 Steward, whom his Lord shall make Ru-  
 ler over his Household, to give them their  
 Portion of Meat in due Season? Blessed  
 is that Servant, whosoever he be, whom  
 his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so  
 doing.

2dly, A Second Observation arising  
 from what our Lord declares in the Text,  
 is, that the Salvation of Men does not  
 depend upon any Differences of External  
 Circumstances in the present Life, but  
 intirely upon the inward Qualifications  
 of their Minds, and upon their Behavi-  
 our under the Circumstances wherein the  
 Providence of God has placed them,  
 whatsoever those Circumstances be. I  
 tell you, says he, in that Night there shall  
 be two Men in one Bed; the one shall be  
 taken, and the other left. And when  
 his Disciples asked him, Where, Lord?  
 He answers in the Text, under a known  
 Proverbial Expression; Where ever the  
 Case is alike, the Event will be the same:  
 Wheresoever the Body is, thither will the  
 Eagles

*Eagles be gathered together.* Not only to **Serm.**  
those who shall be living at the Time and **XVII.**  
Place of our Lord's coming to Judgment,   
but to all others likewise, at all Times  
and in all Places, shall this Declaration  
of His be verified: *Two Men shall be in*  
*one Bed; the one shall be taken, and the*  
*other left:* By no visible or appearing Dif-  
ferences of worldly Circumstances, but  
merely according to their inward moral  
Qualifications, shall Men finally be di-  
stinguished. Not to those in particular,  
who shall be found alive at our Lord's  
Second Coming, does he say, *Blessed is*  
*that Servant whom his Lord, when he com-*  
*eth, shall find so doing:* But his Meaning  
is, to all in general, in all Times and Pla-  
ces; *Blessed is that Servant whom his Lord,*  
*when he cometh, shall find to have so done.*  
Thus when the Prophet *Daniel* says, *ch.*  
*xii. 12. Blessed is he that waiteth, and*  
*cometh to*——the time of the End: The  
Meaning is not, *Blessed is he* that shall  
happen to live at the time of the End;  
but, *Blessed is he* who by waiting, that is,  
by *patient Continuance in well-doing*, by be- **Rom. ii. 7.**  
ing constantly upon his Guard against  
the Temptations of an unrighteous and  
corrupt World, by *Keeping Himself* (as  
*St. John* expresses it) so that *That Wick-*  
*ed One toucheth him not;* blessed is He **1 Joh. v.**  
who **18**



Serm. who by thus *waiting*, shall be found *wor-*  
 XVII. *thy to attain that Life* which shall be re-  
 vealed at the End of the Days, and to  
*stand before the Son of Man.* Many are ve-  
 ry apt to imagine, if they had lived in  
 some other Place or Age of the World,  
 if they had been placed under some other  
 Circumstances than they are, if they had  
 lived in our Saviour's Days, and at a time  
 when one rose from the Dead; the Prin-  
 ciples of Religion would have had a very  
 different Effect upon them, from what  
 they now have. But all this is a very  
 great Fallacy: And Experience has shown,  
 that not upon Differences of Time and  
 Place, but upon the Moral Disposition  
 of Mens Hearts and Minds, does the In-  
 fluence of Religion entirely depend. The  
 Jews in the Wilderness were not at all re-  
 formed, even by the Sight of numerous  
 Miracles. And the Pharisees in our Sa-  
 viour's Time, who said, *If we had been*  
*in the Days of our Fathers, we would not*  
*have been Partakers with them in the Blood*  
*of the Prophets,* did yet, by their Deeds,  
 show themselves to be the genuine Sons,  
 and Inheritors of the Temper, of those  
 who killed the Prophets.

Luke xvi.  
31.

3dly, and *Lastly*, The Last Observation  
 I shall draw from this Discourse of our  
 Sa-

Saviour, of which my Text is the Conclusion, is, that all the Marks or Notes, Serm. XVII. which those of the Church of Rome pretend to give us, of the True Church of God, are such as our Lord here warns his Disciples not to be deceived by, Christ, they tell us, is no where to be found but among *Them*: And the Doctrines and Benefits of the Gospel, can no other way possibly be conveyed to Mankind, than through the particular Channel of Rome. What is this, but the very thing our Lord here admonishes us to beware of? *If any Man shall say unto you, Lo, Here is Christ,* Matt. xxiv. 23—28. *or There; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets.* *Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold,* Luke xvii. 24, 37. *he is in the Desert, go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as, where-ever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together; And as, where-ever the Lightning is, there will the Shining of it be the same, from the one part under Heaven, even unto the other: So also is the Light of the everlasting Gospel, and of the Scripture of Truth.*

Thus again: Pretended Miracles, in order to establish their New Doctrines, and introduce New Practices: What are these, but Accomplishments of that Prediction of our Lord; *There shall arise False Christs*

Serm. *Christs and False Prophets, and shall show*  
**XVII.** *great Signs and Wonders, insomuch that (if*  
*it were possible) they shall deceive the very*  
*Elect !*

Matt. xxiv  
 24

Again; Visibilty, or Worldly Pomp, Grandeur and Authority, which they make to be another Note or Mark of the True Church of God; is directly the Reverse of what our Saviour declared to his Disciples. *They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all Nations for my Name's Sake. And, because Iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold. And, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find Faith on the Earth ?*

Mat. 9, 12.

Luk. xviii.  
 8.

*Marks therefore or Notes of the True Church of Christ, in the nature of things, there can be none, but that One Essential one, which makes it to be the True Church; viz. the Profession and Practice of the Truth; the Profession and Practice of That Doctrine, which our Lord himself taught, and which his Apostles preached and delivered down in Writing to all succeeding Generations. With This; where ever two or three are gathered together in the Name of Christ, there is Christ in the midst of them; that is to say, there is the true*

Matt. xviii.  
 21.

*true Church of God.* Without this; how Serm.  
Many, and how Great Nations soever, XVII.  
conspire together; how numerous soever  
the Multitudes be, which follow each  
other to do Evil; 'tis still only a Sect or Exod.  
Schism, 'tis but a Heresy or Worldly xxlij. 2.  
Faction.





the Church of God, without this, how can  
they, and how Great Nations, however  
opposed together, how numerous together  
the multitude be, which follow each  
other to the Fall, this still only a Seed of Good  
Gospel, is but a Henry or Wench, and a



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A  
SERMON

Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
OF

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, Apr. 18, 1725.

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MATT. V. 16.

*Let your Light so shine before men, that they  
may see your good works, and glorify your  
Father which is in Heaven.*

**L**IGHT, in the first and natural Serm.  
XVIII.  
Sense of the Word, is that which  
causes all things to be Seen as they  
are, in their true Nature, and in their  
porper Colours. 'Tis that which disco-  
vers every Secret, which removes every  
Uncertainty, which detects every Defor-  
mity,

Serm. mity, and opens to us in all their Glory  
 XVIII. the innumerable and inimitable *Beauties*  
 of Nature. Hence in the Figurative  
 Sense, whatsoever enables us to discover  
 any Truth, we usuall speak of as giving  
 us Light in that Matter: For, as the A-  
 postle expresses it, *Eph. v. 13. whatso-*  
*ever doth make manifest, is Light.* And  
 because some things, the more they are in-  
 lightned, the more beautiful they appear;  
 whereas other things love to have their  
 Deformities concealed in Darknes: hence  
 in the Moral Sense also, whatever Actions  
 or Persons are truly virtuous and praise-  
 worthy, and consequently always the  
 more valuable in Proportion, as they are  
 more perfectly and thoroughly known; are  
 frequently in Scripture styled by the name  
 of Light, and the contrary ones by that  
 of Darknes. Concerning God himself,  
 upon account of the infinite Purity and  
 Holiness of his Nature, the Apostle thus  
 speaks, *1 Job. i. 5. God is LIGHT, and in*  
*Him is no Darknes at all.* And to good  
 Men likewise, in their Proportion, is the  
 same manner of speaking applied, *Eph. v.*  
*8. Ye were sometimes Darknes, but Now*  
*are ye LIGHT in the Lord: Walk, as Chil-*  
*dren of Light: ——— And have no Fellow-*  
*ship with the unfruitful Works of Darknes,*  
*but rather reprove them.*

Again;

Again; Because all Luminous Bodies, in Proportion to the Degree of their own Brightness, necessarily diffuse their Light around them, and at a Distance inlighten all other Bodies; hence, in the Religious Sense, a Good Example is a Light shining in Darkness, spreading its Influence every way, diffusing Instruction, Knowledge, Incouragement to Virtue, and Motives to Reformation of Manners, in the midst of a dissolute and corrupt World. In this Sense the Word is used by St. Paul, *Phil. ii. 15. That ye may be blameless, and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as Lights in the World.* And in this Sense 'tis used by our Saviour in the Text; *Let your Light so shine before men. Ye are,* (saith he in the Words immediately foregoing, *Ye are*) *the Light of the World:* As therefore *a City that is set on a hill, cannot be hid; and as men do not light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a Candlestick, and it giveth Light unto all that are in the House:* Even so, saith he, let Your Light shine before men, that may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven: Let your whole Behaviour be so exemplary, and the Influence of your Religion upon  
your



Serm. XVIII. your own Lives so conspicuous to the World, that Men being thereby convinced of the Excellency of your Doctrine, may by your Preaching be led from Error to Truth, and be converted by your Example from Wickedness to Virtue.

'Tis well worth observing here, by the way, that this Expression of our Saviour, concerning Mens *lighting a Candle*, and putting it not under a Bushel, but on a Candlestick, so that it giveth Light unto *all that are in the House*; is the Foundation of that lively and beautiful Image in St. *John's* Vision, where the seven primitive Churches of *Asia* are represented under the Similitude of *Seven Golden Candlesticks*; and the principal and most eminent Persons in those several Churches, as so many *Stars* or *Lights* in those *Candlesticks*, giving Light to the whole Temple or Catholick Church of God.

And this concerning the Nature of that Figurative Expression, *Let your Light so shine before men.*

The following Words, *that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven*, are of very plain and obvious Meaning: That by the Spreading of your Doctrine, and by the  
Influ-

Influence of your Example, the Practice Serm.  
 of true Religion and Goodness may pre- XVIII.  
 vail in the World: That Men may see  
 the Beauty and Excellency of Virtue, and  
 the infinite Benefit that would arise to  
 Mankind from the universal Prevalency  
 of true Religion: That they may be con-  
 vinced of the necessity of reforming their  
 Manners; and of living under a constant  
 Sense of God upon their Minds, in ex-  
 pectation of a righteous Judgment to  
 come. The Practice of Virtue upon *these*  
 Principles, is the Establishment of the  
 Kingdom of God among Men. And in  
 the Inlargement of this Kingdom of  
 Righteousness and Holiness, in the In-  
 crease of the Efficacy of Truth and Vir-  
 tue, which is the proper Subjection of  
 Rational and Free Agents; in this con-  
 sists the Glory of God upon Earth. Thus  
 the Conversion of Unbelievers, which  
 St. Paul describes by their being convin-  
 ced, and *falling down on their Faces and*  
*worshipping God*, 1 Cor. xiv. 24. St. Peter  
 expresses by the same Phrase with this in  
 the Text, of glorifying God, 1 Pet. ii.  
 12. *Having your Conversation honest among*  
*the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak a-*  
*gainst you, as Evil-doers, they may by your*  
*good Works, which they shall behold, glo-*  
*lify GOD in the Day of Visitation.* And  
 G c St.

Serm. St. John, in his *Revelation*, uses the Expression of Mens giving *Glory to GOD*, and *repenting of their evil Deeds*, as Words having one and the same Signification; *Ch. ix. 20. xvi. 9. The rest of the Men, which were not killed by these Plagues, yet REPENTED NOT of ——— their Murders, nor of their Sorceries, nor of their Fornication, nor of their Thefts; but ——— blasphemed the Name of God, who hath Power over these Plagues; and they REPENTED NOT, to give him GLORY.*

Glorifying of God therefore, and promoting Righteousness and Truth among Men, being in Effect one and the same Thing: From hence appears the Reason and the Consistency of our Lord's commanding his Disciples in the Text, to let their Light shine before Men; and yet exhorting them, in another Part of the very same Discourse, *Ch. vi. 1. Take heed that ye DO NOT your Alms before Men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven: And, when thou dost thine Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men: Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward. The Reason, (I say) and the*  
Con-

Consistency of Both these Exhortations, appears from the peculiar Considerations annexed to each Exhortation respectively. Serm. XVIII.

The same thing, in different Circumstances, is not the same thing. A particular good Action, done with a particular View of Vain-glory and popular Applause, ceases to be a religious Action, and falls short of its Reward. The same Action performed with such a View, and in such a manner, as to have a direct and proper tendency to promote and encourage the universal Practice of Virtue in the World; is, in the most immediate and real Sense of the Words, a *glorifying of our Father which is in Heaven*; 'Tis causing Men (as much as in Us lies,) to make Acknowledgment of God, and to order their Lives as being under a perpetual Sense of his Inspection and Government.

Every Act of any Virtue whatsoever, has a natural tendence to *this* End; and in general, by habitual good Living, is the Glory of God, in this Sense of the Phrase, most highly advanced. But some Virtues in particular have a more conspicuous Influence towards this End than others. And since in that Passage which I now referred to, of the same Sermon

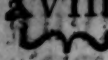


Serm. of our Lord upon the Mount; 'tis agreed  
 XVIII. on all Hands, that What, in the best Co-  
 pies of the Original, is, *Take heed that ye*  
 Matt. xi. 1. *do not your RIGHTEOUSNESS before Men,*  
 means undoubtedly, and is accordingly  
 rendered in our Translation, *Take heed*  
*that ye do not your ALMS before Men*: 'tis  
 very probable that here in my Text like-  
 wise, our Lord, under the general terms,  
*Light and Good Works*, might have a par-  
 ticular Regard to Works of *Benificence*  
*and Charity*: Commanding his Disciples  
 to make conspicuous their Practice of the  
 same Virtue, when their so doing might  
 be an Honour to Religion; which, in  
 other Circumstances, he commands them  
 to keep private, when its being pub-  
 lick would serve only the Purposes of  
 Vain-glory.

And indeed there is no one Christian  
 Virtue, to the Practice of which there  
 are in Scripture given more earnest Ex-  
 hortations, or more large and repeated  
 Promises, than to this of CHARITY.  
*Cast thy Bread upon the Waters; for thou*  
*shalt find it after many Days, Eccles. xi.*  
*1. If thou deal thy Bread to the hungry,*  
*and bring the poor that are cast out, to thy*  
*house: If when thou seest the naked, thou*  
*cover him; and hide not thy self from thine*  
 own

*own flesh : Then shall thy Light break forth* Sermon.  
*—— in obscurity, and thy Darknes be as* XVIII.  
*the Noon-day, Is. lviii. 7——10.* In like  
 manner, in the New Testament, our  
 Lord exhorts : *When thou makest a Feast,*  
*call the Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, the*  
*Blind : And then thou shalt be blessed ; For*  
*they cannot recompence thee ; for thou shalt*  
*be recompenced at the Resurrection of the Just,*  
*Luke xiv. 13, 14.* And in his Descrip-  
 tion of the last Judgment, he expresses  
 the Sentence of the Blessed thus : *Come,*  
*ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the King-*  
*dom prepared for you from the Foundation*  
*of the World : For I was an hungred, and*  
*ye gave me Meat, &c. Matt. xxv. 34.*  
 And in his Discourse to the Pharisees,  
*Luke xi. 41.* Give Alms, says he, of such  
 things as ye have, and behold, all things  
 are clean unto you. His Meaning is ; not  
 that Charity, or any other Virtue, will  
 compensate for vitious and immoral Prac-  
 tices ; but that *these* Virtues are really  
 acceptable before God, in whose Sight  
 the Pharisaical ceremonious Purifications  
 were of no Esteem.

It must and ought here to be acknow-  
 ledged, to the Honour of the present Ge-  
 neration, that there appears to be at this  
 time among us a number of Persons so

Serm. XVIII.  charitably disposed, and so ready to make a good Use of the Plenty wherewith the Providence of God has blessed them; that, were it possible they could be absolutely certain, their Charity should always be expended in such ways, and applied to such Purposes only, for which it was designed; so as neither to become in any Degree an Encouragement to Idleness, nor a Support of any Party, nor an Occasion of Pride, or of raising Persons above those Circumstances in which they might be employed most usefully to the Publick: It cannot at all be doubted, but the Supply would immediately be more than is requisite, to relieve the truly indigent, and to answer the Wants of All who were really unable to provide for the Necessities of Life by Honest Labour. But indeed, hardly any thing is more difficult, in an idle and corrupt Age, than for those who have the strongest Inclinations as well as the greatest Abilities of doing Acts of Beneficence, to find out in what manner, and upon what Objects in particular, they may best bestow their charitable good Offices; so as that the Use and Benefit of them may be the most extensive, and the least liable to Misapplication or Abuse. Nor is it possible in this Case, to lay down any certain and deter-

determinate Rules. Every Person, as he must of Necessity be left to the Determination of his own Prudence, at what particular times and places, and in what proportions he will chuse to bestow his Charity; so must he also in judging about the Manner of disposing it, and upon what Objects, and with what particular Views he will principally direct it; that it may more immediately answer the Intention of the Giver, and may be most conducive to the particular Purposes he is chiefly desirous to promote. According to the different Stations of Life Men have been employed in, and the different Scenes of human Affairs they have seen in the World; they are apt naturally in consequence to frame to themselves very different Notions, what Kinds of Charities will in the whole be most useful to the Publick, and most likely to answer the general Intention with Success. In every Method that has or can be proposed, when considered under different Views and Regards, it cannot be otherwise, but that each one will be found liable in some Respects to more Objections than others, and in some to fewer. Whatever Way be taken, and whatever Care and Circumspection Men use, in the Disposal of their Charity, it will always be possible, that

Serm.  
XVIII.  
W



Serm. the End they propose to themselves shall  
XVIII. not be fully answered: And in no way  
can there be any certain and absolute Security, that every Sort of Miscarriage shall be prevented. That which of all other Methods seems, upon the whole, to have the Advantage in most Respects, as being most extensive in its Influence, and lasting in its Effects; subject to the fewest Inconveniences, and those from time to time the most easily remedied, is the Education of poor Children. Which, when put in a right Method, and directed in a right and proper manner; is in Effect a Compendium of almost every Sort and Kind of Charity, of almost all the several and most different Instances of Beneficence in One. 'Tis, at the same time, both feeding the Hungry, and cloathing the Naked with a Garment. 'Tis instructing the Ignorant in the first Principles of Religion, and promoting a general Sense and Knowledge of God in the World. 'Tis sowing early the Seeds of Virtue and good Manners, and preventing the first Beginnings of those vicious Habits, which when they have taken Root by Custom and long Practice, seldom any Zeal for Reformation of Manners is ever after able to correct. 'Tis, when joined with putting them upon  
Works

Works of Labour and Industry, as it Serm.  
ought always to be; 'tis then (I say) a **XVIII.**  
Remedy against all the ill Effects of Idleness and Poverty, and (by a double Benefit) making those to become useful Members of the Publick, who would otherwise have been a Burden and a Weight upon it. In a Word, 'tis at once relieving the Necessities of the present Generation, and (as far as human Care and Foresight can extend,) preventing the Wants of those which are to come. To this Sort of Charity therefore, (whenever there is reasonable ground to hope it will be duly applied to the Purposes now mentioned,) we are exhorted by all those Arguments in Conjunction, which singly incite us to be beneficent in any of the particular Instances. To this we are invited by all the Considerations of publick Benefit, and by all the Motives and Arguments of Religion. To this we are encouraged by the united Force of all those Promises at once, which in Scripture are made, on many different Occasions, to the several Methods of showing Mercy and Charity.

It has upon some Occasions been observed, and perhaps not always wholly without Reason; that the Children of the meanest

Serm. meanest Parents, sustained, educated, and  
 XVIII. instructed merely upon Charity of O-  
 ~~~~~thers, have sometimes in Consequence of  
 these Advantages, and upon account of
 this very Instruction, been tempted to
 become conceited and vain, and above
 being employ'd in those Meaner Services,
 which are of all others the most necessa-
 ry, and at the same time the most useful
 to the Publick: And sometimes that they
 have become liable to be led away into
 Factions, which being frequently found-
 ed upon Pretences of Religion, do find
 very great Support from whatever is ca-
 pable of being changed into the Ceremo-
 nies and Formalities of Superstition. In
 order to remedy, as far as possible, these
 Inconveniencies, and to turn Objects of Cha-
 rity into useful Members of the Publick,
 to instruct them in the plainest Principles
 of Sobriety and Virtue, and to inure them
 to Labour and Industry, which is the
 great Support of every Nation: It has
 been resolv'd that the poor Children to
 be supported by your Charity, shall for
 the future (and the Design is already be-
 gun actually to be put in Execution) be
 employ'd the greatest Part of their time
 in such Kinds of Work, as may qualify
 them for the lower and most necessary
 Services of Life. And to this End Pro-
 vision

vision has been made, that they shall not only be cloathed and taught as formerly, but that they shall be furnished moreover with Food and Lodging; that, being constantly kept together in a Place of Work and Imployment, the proposed Intention may be more effectually answered; and the Inconveniencies, which it has perhaps not unjustly been apprehended, would follow upon their being raised above their proper Station, we may reasonably hope, will in great Measure be prevented.

One evident and very obvious good Effect of this Method, is, that whereas, when Children have only been taught in Schools, it too often happens that by returning constantly home to their Parents or Relations, the Principles of Religion and good Manners wherein they have been instructed, have from time to time been as it were extinguiſhed by the Influence of ill Examples, and over-powered by the continual Sight of vitious Practices; they will now, as far as possible, be kept out of that Danger of being led away by ill Example; and, in a good Degree, out of the reach of the Contagion, of the most profligate and dissolute Part of the World, For Vice is not natural

Serm. to Mankind, but taught by ill Education
 XVIII. and corrupt Examples, confirmed by Custom and Habit, and then indeed very hard to be rooted out by the strongest arguments or by the wisest instructions. For, that which has long been crooked, will not easily be made straight; *and that which is wanting, cannot be numbred*, Eccl. i. 15. But if young Persons can from the Beginning be kept out of ill Company, and be taught only the plain Principles of Religion and Virtue, and be inured to Industry and moderate Labour, they will easily be formed to Habits of Sobriety and Modesty, to a Sense of the Reasonableness of virtuous Living, and to a Hatred of those vicious and debauched Practices, which bring so great a Part of Mankind visibly to Temporal, and too certainly to Eternal Destruction.

And whereas *Poor Orphans particularly*, who are left wholly destitute of Friends and Relations, are apt to be exposed not only to the Disadvantages of Ignorance and Want of Instruction, and to the Seducements of ill Company in the worst and lowest Part of a loose and degenerate World, but very frequently also to lie under the greatest Temporal Wants, and be subject to such a variety of Hardships

ships and Oppressions, as often render *Serm.*
 them almost incapable of any useful Em- *XVIII.*
 ployment in the World: By the Method
 now proposed, *These Objects* in particular,
 as they will probably be more willing than
 others to submit to such a manner of E-
 ducation as may best fit them for the
 meanest and most necessary Services, so
 These ('tis likely) will be the *principal*
and most numerous Sharers in your present
 Beneficence. Which is one not inconsiderable additional Recommendation of the
 Design of turning Charity into this particular Channel.

The Provision now made for accommodating the poor Children with Food and Lodging, who before were only Cloathed and Taught, must indeed of necessity cause a considerable Increase of the Annual Expence. But if there be good Reason to hope, (as there plainly is in the Nature of the Thing) that the *Accession of Usefulness to the Charity* by this Method, will in Proportion be greater than the *Increase of the Expence*; this is a very just Argument to prevail with well-disposed Persons, to inlarge their Contributions. *Every Man, according as he purposes in his* *2Cor.ix.7.*
Heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful Gi-
ver.

Serm. ver. — As it is written, he hath dispersed
 XVIII. abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth for ever. — Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causes through Us Thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this Service, not only supplieth the Wants of the Saints, but is abundant also by many Thanksgivings unto God: whilst by the Experiment of this ministration; they glorify God for your professed Subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal Distribution unto Them, and unto all Men.

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